

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 195 550

SP 017 190

AUTHOR Ford, Paul: And Others
TITLE Teacher Corps Networking: Purpose and Potential.
INSTITUTION Western Washington Univ., Bellingham.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Teacher Corps.
PUB DATE 80
CONTRACT J00-78-0334
NOTE 83p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Resources; Cooperative Planning; Exceptional Persons; *Governance; *Information Networks; Inservice Teacher Education; *Management Information Systems; *Program Administration; *Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Self Evaluation (Groups); Special Education
IDENTIFIERS *Far West Teacher Corps Network WA; *Teacher Corps

ABSTRACT

An overview is presented of the objectives of the Far West Teacher Corps Network. A description is given of the development of the network and achievements in the areas of community involvement, inservice teacher education, exceptional child programs, management information systems, and project management and evaluation. Chapters are included on the role of the executive secretary and the network theory from a Teacher Corps perspective. Generalizations are offered for those who are interested in establishing a network. It is suggested that even though network members do not have identical objectives, it is possible for them to help each other if they share a common goal. Network governance as well as program policy and implementation should rest equally among the membership, and decision making should be shared. Flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of members' projects characterizes a successful network. (JD)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED195550

TEACHER CORPS NETWORKING: PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL

BY

PAUL FORD
WALT Le BARON
PAUL R. WALKER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Far West Teacher Corps Network
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225

SP 017 190

CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL FORD
Professor of School Administration
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225

WALT Le BARON
El Bar Farms
Box 322, Route 1
Edwards, Missouri 65326

PAUL RANDY WALKER
Executive Secretary
Far West Teacher Corps Network
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225

This publication was produced under Contract #300780334 to Western Washington University from the United States Office of Education, Teacher Corps. The opinions expressed herein should not necessarily be construed as representing the opinions of the United States Office of Education. Nor should they be construed as necessarily representing the policy or opinion of any other agency or organization.

Published 1980 by Western Washington University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.	1
CHAPTER 1: THE FAR WEST TEACHER CORPS NETWORK.	2
Section I: Genesis.	2
Section II: Strands of Growth.	4
Section III: Product Achievement.	6
Section IV: Human Dimensions	15
Section V: Why Did It Work?	26
CHAPTER 2: THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S ROLE.	28
Section I: Need	28
Section II: People-Oriented Relationships.	29
Section III: "Thing"-Oriented Relationships	33
Section IV: Blending People and "Things"	35
CHAPTER 3: NETWORK THEORY FROM A TEACHER CORPS PERSPECTIVE	38
Section I: Original Teacher Corps Networks.	38
Section II: Definition of a Network.	40
Section III: Other Aspects of Network Theory.	45
Section IV: Practicalities	52
Section V: Conclusion	58
CHAPTER 4: DESIGN OF FUTURE TEACHER CORPS NETWORKS	60
Section I: Potential Network Purposes	60
Section II: Background for Decisions About Continuing a Network	62
Section III: How to Get a Network Started	67
Section IV: Stages in a Network's Life	72
Section V: Conclusion	74
Appendix A: Model for Network Activity: Far West Teacher Corps Network.	77

FOREWORD

The Far West Network, along with eleven other Teacher Corps networks, was established in 1975 as a vehicle for providing the directors of Teacher Corps projects with the opportunity to share common ideas, concerns and solutions to problems. The network was expanded to provide this same opportunity to project deans in 1978. Chapter 1 of this monograph presents a detailed description of the development of the Far West Network.

While this historical perspective documenting the growth of the network is of utmost importance to those seeking to develop similar networks, what is even more important is the "personality" of the network--those key individuals who collectively built the Far West Network to the point of being recognized as one of the most innovative and responsive networks in the Teacher Corps.

The executive secretary, the directors of the projects and, most recently, the deans of education where these projects are housed have been able to develop a network that is responsive to the needs of various ethnic groups living in isolated rural areas, densely populated urban areas and island territories, all of which cover five different time zones. How did they do this? By laying aside individual project needs and creating an atmosphere of camaraderie which allowed all projects' needs to be addressed. The activities emanating from the network were always aimed at all projects--a difficult task indeed. Yet, the failures were few and the successes were great.

The foregoing statement may indeed reflect some obvious bias because I have, with pleasure, served as the program officer for the Far West Network since it began. I am proud of and grateful for the experience and for my association over the years with Randy, Herb Hite, Roger, Porter, Alan, Doris, Fono, Lourdes, Ralph, Jim, Bob, Tom, Mick, Keith, Dick, John, Herb Smith and the deans. Thanks! You're a great group of people.

Haroldie K. Spriggs
Education Program Specialist
Teacher Corps

CHAPTER 1

The Far West Teacher Corps Network

Paul Ford

Section I: Genesis

This is the story of how a family of Teacher Corps projects, dispersed over an immense geographic region and including a broad cultural and ethnic mix, learned to work together and share in a parity relationship to maximize their individual project purposes and potentials. It is the story of the Far West Teacher Corps Network, established in 1975, which included projects in Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and the Trust Territories. Within a region encompassing five time zones, the network served Alaska, Native and Asian Americans, Blacks, Caucasians, and Chicanos in sites ranging from island and rural isolation to densely populated cities. Network projects did not have common target populations or exactly the same program objectives. What they shared and what bound their confederation were common general purposes and potentials, as well as the commitment to realize these through sharing varied viewpoints, knowledges and skills in an open and evolving organization. The network's original mission of self-help for and among its members was expressed in its intent to:

Assist with the experiment of project management through facilitating communication with network members, Teacher Corps/Washington, professional associations, State Departments of Education, teacher training institutions, and agencies that serve children and youth.

Provide a vehicle for developing technical assistance activities of mutual interest that would not be supported practically by any single project
(Bylaws adopted May 28, 1975).

That the network's organizational framework should be a confederation among equals rather than a political or bureaucratic hierarchy was stated explicitly in the Bylaws:

The network shall have only the power that is vested in it by Teacher Corps project directors and it will not exercise authority over individual projects (Bylaws adopted May 28, 1975).

That the general welfare of all network members rather than site-specific needs of individual members should be the thrust of network energies was stated in a policy on financial assistance to individual projects.

No funds shall be provided to any single program to carry out or conduct activities which will not accrue *benefits to a majority of other members' programs*.

Any individual proposal to the Network Board shall include, in detail, the means by which the *benefits of its proposed effort will benefit member programs* (Board policy adopted October 12, 1976).

The Far West Network was organized within policy disseminated by national Teacher Corps in 1974-75, when it established twelve such networks throughout the country. Generally permissive policy guidelines stated that each network should seek to maximize communication among its project directors so that collaboration, shared technical assistance and social support among projects would strengthen individual projects and total network impact. Network designers were cautioned to maintain openness and flexibility in organization so that each network might fulfill its potential in respect to the particular cluster of projects it served. No one organizational model was favored. The national guidelines underscored maximum network autonomy within Teacher Corps' legal guidelines. For purposes of accountability, each network was to document carefully its own organization and implementation activities. Each network was to be governed by its own board comprised of local Teacher Corps project directors, and each board was to select its own executive secretary who was responsible to the board. Program development and evaluation, management and budget control, as well as selection of a headquarters site, were board prerogatives. Implicitly and explicitly, national policy stressed self-determination for each network.¹

By September of 1978, however, control of each network by its board was modified by a national Teacher Corps policy change. That change made the network's executive secretary responsible to Teacher Corps/Washington with a role as liaison between national Teacher Corps, Teacher Corps contractors, and Teacher Corps projects within the network.² This changed the executive secretary/local network board relationship, making the executive secretary an administrative agent and arm of Washington, D.C., as well as a facilitator of local board policy. Thus a sense of hierarchy was introduced into the previous network concept.

Section II: Strands of Growth

Two interwoven strands represent the Far West Network's growth and accomplishments. One strand deals with the easily describable productivity seen in terms of conferences and workshops, together with voluminous documentation reports, monographs and other "things" which a "thing"-oriented society demands as proof of achievement. As we shall see, the network was productive in this work.

But there is another strand--the human dimensions strand. That has to do with what people and agencies become as a result of their work and more specifically of their work together. There is strong evidence to support the view that personnel and projects involved in the Far West Network changed and grew during their network involvement. That change and growth can be described in terms of increased cross-project and personnel innovativeness, adaptivity and problem-solving capability. As network members learned how to work together, the network, represented by its board and executive secretary, became more effective and so, too, did projects. Thus, the two growth strands coalesced to support and nourish each other; hard-product emphasis and human growth became one integrated pattern. That integration, which included high levels of sharing among network members, is the real story of the Far West Network.

The network's early days were devoted to establishing a governance and administrative base, as well as to probing for

program emphases. By June of 1975 an executive secretary had been employed, Western Washington University was selected to serve as network headquarters, and Bylaws had been adopted. So much for governance and administration.

The board agreed that the network's major *process-type* priorities should be to:

- Develop a communication system providing for a continuous interchange of program practices between and among network members.
- Develop a collaborative approach in designing and developing new and/or improved program components.
- Serve as a regional spokesperson in interacting with Teacher Corps/Washington in program and policy issues.

In implementing the first two process objectives, the board moved toward developing program priorities for 1975-76. The obvious questions were:

- What programs and program concerns do member Teacher Corps projects have in common?
- Are there other concerns or needs such as those for improved management and evaluation systems shared by a majority of the member projects?
- What needs for specific types of technical assistance do member projects share?
- Based on answers to the foregoing questions, what programs and/or activities should the network sponsor at the network or macro level to assist member projects to carry out their specific or micro level activities?

To answer these questions the board members met and shared information about their individual project needs. Consultants, knowledgeable about the program emphases of the member projects, were asked to assist in identification of general program thrusts which might be undertaken at the network level to assist member projects in carrying out their individual programs. By June of 1975, discussions and analyses of various alternatives led to establishment of the following *program* priorities for 1975-76:

The Community Component. How each project might more successfully involve the local community in project activities.

Inservice Teacher Education. How each project might provide high-impact retraining programs for public school and university personnel involved or who might be involved in local Teacher Corps project activities.

Exceptional Child Programs. How each project might provide increased learning opportunities for children representing the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of the network region, as well as children with learning problems and the gifted.

Management Information Systems. How the network itself, as well as individual projects, might develop means for managing information storage and retrieval.

Project Management and Evaluation. How each project might develop an effective and efficient system for designing, developing, and implementing its activities, together with a system providing for process and product evaluation of activities.

These programs tended to focus on generating "hard" products--products which could be observed or touched or indeed measured to some degree. In retrospect, it appears that the directors wanted to assure themselves that the network would generate products which would be easy to describe and show to Teacher Corps/Washington in an era which demanded accountability. Stress on this product-oriented strand of network activity began in 1975 and continued throughout the network's life. From the onset of network-sponsored program activities, this strand was interwoven with the human dimensions strand. The board of directors understood the interactive nature of the two strands and the potential rewards of such interaction for their individual projects and the network. For purposes of clarity, however, the human dimensions strand is dealt with in Section IV.

Section III: Product Achievement

Each of the following activities was planned by a team comprised of interested members of the board of directors, the executive

secretary, and consultants employed by the board as resources for development and implementation. Interaction of board members with staff and consultants was seen not only as a means for strengthening program activities, but also for strengthening board members' positive interaction with one another in teaming situations. The network's executive secretary was responsible for carrying out the administrative responsibilities related to each planning team's intent. A documentarian/evaluator was present at each workshop and conference to collect and analyze data, and prepare a written evaluation report.

Community Component.

1. Community Education Workshop (1976):

Target Group: Three participants from each site with two of the three members being either community coordinators or members of the school community council. Thirty-six participants.

Purpose: Each team assessed strengths and weaknesses of its present community component and developed plans to strengthen its program, including ways the community coordinator, school community council, and inter-agency council might improve effectiveness.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. Participants rated this workshop as being highly effective. A monograph was published by the network: Lyday, Powell, Smith and Winecoff, eds., Primer for Community Education.

2. Community Education Workshop (1977):

Target Group: Teams of three or four including target school staff, community coordinator, and

- community members active in local projects. Thirty-three participants.
- Purpose:** Site teams developed skills and plans for working with school faculty, community councils, other agency personnel, and school volunteers in both the concept and process of community education with particular focus on the exceptional child and multi-cultural education.
- Output:** Documentation/Evaluation Report. Participants rated this workshop outstanding. No information was reported regarding how these participants functioned when they returned to their sites, although the quality of the work they completed during the workshop would suggest a high success level for participants.

Inservice Teacher Education.

1. Issues Conference (1975):

- Target Group:** Project directors, coordinators, program specialists, education association representatives, higher education faculty, and school administrators. Twenty-five participants.
- Purpose:** A panel of consultants discussed issues involved in retraining of practicing teachers. These issues included governance, program development, and roles of involved agencies.
- Output:** Project directors (the network's board) began establishing criteria and guidelines for developing inservice programs. A monograph was published by the network: Roy A. Edelfelt, Criteria for Local Inservice Education Programs, 1976 and 1977 reprint.

2. Problems and Procedures for Demonstrating Inservice Programs (1977):

- Target Group: Eight representatives from each network project. Ninety participants.
- Purpose: Participants developed work plans for demonstrations of local inservice programs.
- Output: Site-specific action plans were developed. Two monographs were published by the network: Roy A. Edelfelt, ed., Inservice Education: Criteria for and Examples of Local Programs, 1977; Roy A. Edelfelt, ed., Inservice Education: Demonstrating Local Programs, 1978.

3. Deans' Conference on Inservice:

- Target Group: Deans of education and project directors from each of the network's projects. Thirty participants.
- Purpose: The target group heard papers regarding development of inservice programs in schools and colleges of education.
- Output: A monograph was published by the network: Paul R. Walker, ed., The Institutionalization of Change and Inservice in Schools and Colleges of Education, 1978.

Exceptional Child Programs.

1. Mainstreaming Workshop (1975):

- Target Group: A team consisting of a principal, special educator, and teacher representing one school from each of the Far West Teacher Corps Projects. Thirty-two participants.
- Purpose: Each team acquired knowledge and skills to be applied in making educational program decisions in its school.
- Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. The documentation/evaluation report described

positive cognitive and affective changes in participants based on immediate and follow-up evaluations. Impact on children was not reported.

2. Multicultural Education Workshop (1977):

Target Group: Two representatives from each project.

Twenty-two participants.

Purpose: Participants received instruction in ethno-therapy and application techniques.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. The documentation/evaluation report pointed to the need for a follow-up workshop. A monograph was published by the network: Price M. Cobbs, M.D., and Diane K. Winokur, Education for Ethnic and Racial Diversity, 1977. Impact on children was not reported.

3. Special Education Workshop (1977):

Target Group: Five participants from each project including administrators, K-12 teachers, and special education teachers representing twelve projects. State Education Department personnel were also included. Eighty-five participants.

Purpose: Participants acquired knowledge of current issues and trends in special education, analyzed strengths and weaknesses in their own special education programs, and developed a plan to remediate at least one problem they identified in their own special education program.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. Participants rated workshop excellent, but noted that as individuals they did not have a powerful influence on special education

programs in their school districts. Impact on children was not reported.

4. Multicultural Education Workshop (1978):

Target Group: Three to four individuals from each project representing local school district personnel, university personnel, target community and local project staff. Sixty-two participants.

Purpose: Each site team identified specific multicultural needs at its site. Each team identified specific information needs and developed a plan for a site-specific multicultural inservice program for community, Teacher Corps, and school personnel.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. Participant response was very positive but indicated the need for specific materials and resources to be applied at the local site level. Impact on children was not reported.

5. Special Education Conference (1978):

Target Group: Project site teams of four members each who were responsible for their project's special education component. Each team was comprised of a teacher, administrator, parent, and a local Teacher Corps staff member. Fifty-four participants.

Purpose: Each team: identified site-specific skills needed by each team member to integrate handicapped students into regular classrooms; identified resources to help the team members acquire needed skills; developed a management plan for a site-specific skill development (inservice) program that could assist each role group represented at the conference.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. Participants successfully completed the management plan for effecting the inservice program. Participants' responses were highly positive. Considerable emphasis was placed on the usefulness of the Hammond Management System which was used by conference participants in developing the management plans for inservice programs. Impact on children was not reported.

6. Multiculturalism in Education Conference (1979):

Target Group: Three or four representatives from each site including school administrators, teachers, university faculty, community members, and Teacher Corps staff. Fifty-four participants.

Purpose: Each participant developed skills in recognizing culturally related behaviors and learned to train others in these skills. Participants were to return to their local project sites and train local site personnel.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. Ninety percent of the participants reported they were better able to recognize culture-related behaviors and better able to teach others that skill. The overall evaluation of this conference yielded highly positive participant response. Impact on children was not reported.

7. Cross-Cultural Round Table (1980):

Target Group: Project directors.

Purpose: This conference was for the purpose of assisting participants to define the content of cross-cultural studies and to apply knowledges acquired to their own projects.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. The report was not available at the time of this writing (June 1980).

Project Management and Evaluation, Including Information Systems.

1. Communications Workshop (1975):

Target Group: Team leaders from each network project. Eleven participants.

Purpose: Participants developed skills in interpersonal relations and group management facilitation. They also studied Joint Inquiry as a model for improving classroom instruction.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. Participants rated the work as excellent, particularly with respect to the Joint Inquiry model.

2. Documentation/Evaluation Workshop (1977):

Target Group: Directors and staff from each of the network's projects. Twenty-four participants.

Purpose: Each project team learned a four-phase process for project development, evaluation, and documentation known as the Hammond Management System.

Output: Project directors began applying this to preparation of their local program/project proposals. The plan was employed in formulating the network's three-year Technical Proposal for funding by Teacher Corps/Washington, D.C. The network published a monograph: Peter J. Gray, ed., Program Documentation and Evaluation, 1977.

3. Washington Policy Seminar--Las Vegas Version (1977):

Target Group: Individuals invited by each Teacher Corps project and representing state school officers and state agency staffers, school

superintendents and other administrators, college deans, provosts and other academic administrators, state legislators, state and local school board members, and interest groups (teachers and administrators). One hundred-ten participants.

Purpose: The seminar, "How Educational Policy Decisions are Made in Washington--Institutions, Processes and Problems," was to help participants understand the broad conceptual framework of educational policy, how it is made and how it can be influenced.

Output: A monograph was published by the network: Joseph Crowley, The Washington Policy Seminar, 1977. The seminar was jointly sponsored with the California Teacher Corps Network. This was the first cooperative undertaking by two Teacher Corps networks and demonstrated the efficiency and the effectiveness of such cooperation.

4. Strategic Planning for Colleges/Schools of Education (1980):

Target Group: Administrators and faculty from universities, participating in network projects, project directors and staff, school administrators and teachers from project sites.

Purpose: The Telecommunications (by satellite) Conference was to assist colleges/schools of education identify their future problems and potentials. Participants were familiarized with a four-step process including: (1) assessment of institutional capacities; (2) clarification of institutional purposes and values; (3) assessment of institutional environment (both external

and internal); (4) identification of potentials and strategies to achieve these potentials.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. The report was not available at the time of this writing (June 1980).

5. Principals' Workshop (1980):

Target Group: Principals from each Teacher Corps project site.

Purpose: The general purpose was to acquaint participants with the role of a principal in a Teacher Corps school. To this end, participants were given background regarding Teacher Corps purposes, the school as a formal and informal organization, processes for successful staff development, and means to bring the community into the Teacher Corps process.

Output: Documentation/Evaluation Report. The report was not available at the time of this writing (June 1980).

General Assistance Center. The network, through its board and executive secretary, provided many opportunities for local project staff to attend workshops and conferences held by national Teacher Corps and various technical assistance agencies. This support was intended to provide project staff with specialized knowledge and skills particularly relevant to their program activities.

Section IV: Human Dimensions

The Far West Teacher Corps Network was created as a self-help organization to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of its member projects. The healthy social organization, as Miles has noted, is one that not only functions effectively in the here and now--but which also adapts rationally to a changing environment and, in fact, is highly capable of framing new pursuits and potentials.³

It grows and so, too, do the people within it. Such growth should be expected in a healthy network; but that is not to say that growing, developing, and becoming will be without some confusion and instability.

Networks are functional systems, dealing with matters of actual or potential need. By being able to adopt new missions and objectives more easily than organizations which tend to become ends unto themselves, networks avoid becoming relict systems. Because these networks are functionally directed, continuously adopting new tasks, they may seem to be unstable as individual interests change and the roles of individuals shift within hierarchy. Such short-term disabilities are overcome, however, by the common interests of and on the emphasis in the qualities of the individual as resource. Under these conditions, network members can tolerate delayed gratification. They are able to grin and bear a particular problem of relatively little interest to them, for they know their interests and worth will eventually be tapped by the network's shifting its action focus. Thus, any short-term instability is really an element that makes for long-term dynamic-equilibrium.⁴

The question is: To what degree did the Far West Network as a confederated organization avoid the trap of straightjacket institutionalization which leads to a kind of program paralysis and the equally dangerous snare of goal diffusion which leads to random activity? To answer this question, we must look first at how the network governed itself, for the governance structure of any social organization is significant in determining the organization's capabilities for rational change--change related both to the organization and to the individuals within that organization.

Governance and Decision Making. When the network was organized in 1975 under a federal mandate, its governing board included the director of each member Teacher Corps project but no "outsiders." By February of 1978, the board, following national Teacher Corps policy, established a Deans' Council with a representative from each college or school of education involved in Far West Network activities. By September of 1978, the Council was provided its own budget and, in

the spring of 1979, the network board voted to include three deans on its seven-member executive committee. This vote represented an obvious willingness by the board to share its authority with project university deans. There was no direct national policy to require such action.

The willingness to share authority was no doubt reflective of the board's enlightened self-interest. Deans are the administrative authorities within the schools and colleges of education where Teacher Corps projects are located, and some deans have considerable political impact on legislation affecting educational programs. Obviously there could be considerable value in capturing deans' attention, as well as their expertise and commitment. And so, a collegial relationship began to form among deans and directors in establishing network policy and programs. That this occurred is documented fully in reports from the deans' and directors' meetings, held in July and November of 1979.

Why include deans? There are some significant points here. For whatever reason, the directors did invite an "outside" group, the deans, to join them and share authority and decision making with them. In doing that, the directors moved toward opening their network to possibilities for increased growth and change. These possibilities would accrue from: (1) the varying interests of deans; (2) the various expertise represented among them; and (3) the authority of the dean to get done on the home campus (project site) what a project director could not get done because of his/her limited authority with respect to faculty and institutional resources. Thus, modification in the network's governance structure may be seen as a means of increasing the network's critical mass with respect to policy and program development, as well as on-campus influence.

The board's willingness to share its authority with the deans was enhanced no doubt by the members' feelings of mutual trust and respect for each other. Goddu in his Far West Network Impact Study (1978) points to the high quality of interpersonal relations among the network's directors.⁵ Having faith in each other and the network would be a reasonable basis for directors to risk involvement of outsiders in the venture.

Openness and flexibility in the board's governance policy were apparent also in program planning. Once the board determined a program priority, it established a planning committee comprised of one or more board members, the executive secretary, consultants as needed, and/or staff from local Teacher Corps projects. The planning committee then developed the workshop, conference or other activity without board interference. Obviously, the board could have acted differently by imposing its will directly on program development either with or without using the executive secretary to make all program-related decisions. Not so with the Far West Network; sufficient trust and respect existed among members so that program planning and execution were delegated and shared responsibilities.

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its governance and management structure, the board established an executive planning committee, an editorial committee to oversee network publications and a network needs assessment committee. In addition to achieving specific product-oriented ends, its committees served another important purpose which was to increase contact and direct communication among directors, thus helping to strengthen ties of understanding.

Problem Solving and Adaptiveness. All organizations, even the healthiest, face problems. Some problems can be anticipated, others cannot. The successful organization has strong capacities to anticipate problems, to solve them, and to keep them solved with minimal disruption to the organization and its personnel. Indeed, problem solving tends to strengthen rather than weaken an organization.⁶ But even the successful organization encounters unanticipated problems. The degree to which the organization approaches and solves such problems, while at the same time strengthening itself internally, is a major test of that organization's health.

In fall 1978, the network confronted an unanticipated problem of some magnitude. Teacher Corps/Washington specified that the board's executive secretary was no longer solely the agent of the board, but was also responsible to Teacher Corps/Washington and would function as liaison between Washington and Teacher Corps contractors and Teacher Corps projects. In this role, it appeared that the executive

secretary would also be a management agent of Washington, as well as a facilitator of programs established by the network's board of directors. Two concerns arose from this situation:

- What was the executive secretary's relationship to the board which had hired him?
- Would the network be free to operate as a network under the governance policies and procedures it had established in 1975, or was the network to become part of the national Teacher Corps bureaucracy?

To complicate these issues, federal authorities were not definitive with respect to how the network's board should interpret the changed executive secretary's role.

An organization weak in problem-solving abilities would probably have reacted to such a situation in either of two ways. There would have been outright resentment with respect to the federal mandate, or there would have been a passive and nonreflective response to the mandate. Neither behavior characterized board action. By mutual agreement, working relationships between the board and the executive secretary remained approximately the same as they had in the past. The board's attitude to the federal mandate seems to have been: "Yes, that's fine, but we intend to go on with our work."

Rumor became reality in 1979 with the federal decision to cease funding networks because of severe budget restrictions. The decision meant that the Far West Network budget must be expended by July 31, 1980. The network board might have dealt irrationally with this problem in at least two ways. It might have decided to allocate the network budget equally among each of the network's projects so that each local project would spend the funds as it wished; or, the board might have saved itself considerable time and energy by simply returning the funds to Washington. But the board behaved in neither way. Rather, in cohesive and consistent fashion, it took the position that the common welfare of network projects was still of paramount concern. The result of this stance was a meeting of deans and directors in November, 1979, where priorities were established regarding how network funds might best be used to advance the common objectives of all network members. The program priorities were to:

- *Provide assistance to projects in helping higher education institutions (colleges and schools of education)*

make structural adjustments, modify attitudes and improve skills so that they might become more effective, field centered, competency attending, capable of practicing collaboration with SEA's and LEA's, community and other relevant reference groups. This was accomplished by a conference conducted through the use of a telecommunications satellite with large target groups including higher education, SEA and LEA personnel from within the Far West Network.

- *Assist key personnel, especially school principals, within local Teacher Corps projects in institutionalizing local Teacher Corps programs. This was accomplished through local needs assessments and a principals' conference during April, 1980.*
- *Produce a summative report of Far West Network impact with the intent that this might help explain how a network operates. The report was produced by the executive secretary and staff.*
- *Provide general assistance to projects in meeting the need to share transferable project elements. This was accomplished by project directors working together to develop appropriate dissemination mechanisms; one such mechanism considered was a journal that would continue even after network funding had ceased.*

The foregoing decisions represented the network's internal strength and cohesiveness, its consistency with respect to network policy framed in 1975, and its problem-solving ability and adaptiveness in the face of terminated federal funding. These decisions and the decision-making processes themselves illustrated the network's strength and its attention to the human dimensions side of organizational growth.

Introspection and Self-Renewal. If an organization is to approximate its maximum potential, then it is necessary to ask and answer questions such as: "Who are we?" "Where are we going?" "Are our goals appropriate and are our processes for achieving goals effective and efficient?" The network board believed that the way to self-renewal was through self-evaluation relevant to such questions and evaluation conducted by qualified external consultants.

The questions were answered in part by the network's 1978-1981 Technical Proposal for federal funding. The general confederative, self-help nature of the organization was a thread that ran throughout that document and was expressed in these goals or general guiding principles:

- The network develops mechanisms and techniques for helping projects meet their specific objectives by development of training activities for project directors, project personnel, and ancillary personnel which affect Teacher Corps projects.
- The network is a communication link between projects in the Far West where mutual concerns and problems can be shared and resolved.
- The network is a resource for sharing materials and for providing projects access to expert consultants from local, regional, or national sources.
- The network is flexible so that it can respond to project needs in different settings, dependent upon the nature of the network task.
- The network decisions reflect a collaborative decision-making process, with each project having equal opportunity to participate in management of network activities. This collaborative mode allows projects self-determination for reaching solutions to local concerns.
- The network is a linkage with National Technical Assistance Centers, Recruitment and Community Technical Resource Centers, State Education Departments, the organized profession, local education agencies, higher education institutions, and other networks.
- The ultimate network function is to provide the managerial and technical coordination necessary to effect the principles listed above.

The means for carrying out these goals or general principles were seen to be twofold. Through coordination at the executive secretary level, it was possible to provide projects direct access to needed specific technical assistance and materials; the executive secretary served also to provide linkage with national Teacher Corps and other agencies. Through assessment and planning by the network board and coordination by the executive secretary, it was possible to attack the other general network goals.

The network board, using its own evaluation, determined that the executive secretary was meeting board expectations. But to determine the appropriateness of the network's goals and the efficiency and effectiveness of processes to meet these goals, which were not the direct initiatory responsibility of the executive secretary, the board chose a different evaluation method. That involved employment in 1977 of a consultant, Roland Goddu, to conduct an evaluation of the network's

impact on its family of projects. The board's original objectives were to determine:

- If there was a potentially better, more cost-effective system for carrying out network activities--a system more needs-responsive and developmentally oriented than the one currently used.
- If network activities had produced visible effects on projects and individuals, that is, if the information and skills presented during network activities were actually made use of by local projects.

After reviewing the draft data collection instrument submitted by Goddu, the board revised the evaluation process and objectives. The modified process included:

- An on-site visit to each project by a project director from another network site. The identification by that director of the effect of network activities on the local project visited.
- A report from the visiting project director concerning what transferable practice he had observed in his site visitation.

The board's reformulated objectives for the study were to:

- Review the job being done by the network by examining effect at the local level (i.e., to carry out an effect study).
- Improve skills of the visiting project director, both as an observer and as a project director (i.e., engage in a staff development effort).
- Record the study process and resulting products in order to identify areas of potential improvement in the network's study and self-development components (i.e., undertake the documentation of the design, implementation, and results of the study).

Goddu's⁷ major findings with respect to network impact on local projects or project personnel were:

- Local project personnel acquired valuable knowledge and skills from network activities with respect to their own project emphasis.
- Local projects had demonstrable, shareable, effective practices. These included budgeting, training, and curriculum approaches.
- As a sharing device, the network needed major improvement. Local project personnel reported that network documents and resource listings were useful and they also valued time spent in sharing ideas. But they said that they

required more discussion of the practical utility of an idea or suggestion--more depth and more reality.

- People from the various projects developed mutual respect and trust from attending network-sponsored meetings. The apparent looseness of network activities, together with many opportunities for open and frank discussions, was seen as helpful in generating cohesiveness within the group.
- Project directors valued self-help to improve their projects. The process through which project directors visited another project (in the conduct of this study) was seen as useful to the visitor as he/she sought improvement of his/her project.

Goddu also mentioned questions for which answers were not apparent:

- Is the network a cost-effective mode of delivering service? The answer: There was some evidence that if change in local project operations was the criterion, then centralized training activity had low cost effectiveness. Its effectiveness was greater if the criterion was change in the individuals associated with a local project. Likewise, there was evidence that a centralized activity could be cost effective in building trust and common understanding if it included on-site activity.
- Can effect be documented? The answer: No, because the data available were based on opinion and there was no instrumentation at hand to measure change.
- What are effective training modes? The answer: There was no final answer, but Goddu's analysis indicated that the network's training modes were narrow and of limited utility. He made a number of suggestions, including:
 - a. more variety in program topics, formats, and consultants used at network-sponsored meetings
 - b. more small-group work sessions at network-sponsored meetings
 - c. more staff visits to other projects
 - d. more network-sponsored staff development activity
 - e. increased involvement of college and school of education faculty in network activities
 - f. wider dissemination of documentation/evaluation reports
 - g. more activities for team leaders
 - h. visits by workshop trainers to projects to aid in on-site implementation of techniques presented

Goddu's finding that the network's training modes were narrow and of limited utility seems to conflict with the documentation/evaluation reports for each major network activity. Those reports generally provided positive or very positive participant response to the training format and content.

Goddu's study included also a somewhat revised model of how the network might operate its activities. The network adopted many of Goddu's recommendations. Consequently, during 1978-80, the network sharpened its focus and programs. The interested reader will find Goddu's model in Appendix A.

Sharing. Given the network's vast geographic expanse, as well as the varied interests of its constituency, what was the glue that bound its membership? That glue was sharing. Though Goddu's study indicated that the network could have improved its methods for sharing, there was obvious, as well as subtle, evidence to support the idea that sharing was the foundation upon which the network and its growth rested.

The obvious evidence to support the value of sharing was contained in project directors' reports of what they learned from network activities. A summary of this evidence was reported by Goddu, and it included knowledge and skills related to assessment, documentation, management, planning, team leadership, inservice program development, community involvement, and instructional program development.⁸

For the most part, these are technical knowledges and skills learned from sharing. But there is another kind of sharing which involves more than acquisition of technical knowledge and skills. It satisfies man's need for man.

To share is to participate, to enjoy or suffer with others. At its best, sharing brings to man, as a social animal, fulfillment of the needs for identity, stimulation, and security. In wading through the "umpteenth" pages of verbatim participant response contained in the documentation/evaluation report for each major network activity, one is struck by the frequency of language which alludes to project directors' needs for contact with people from other projects. Why?

In the respondents' views: "To validate that I as a director am doing what I should be doing; to test my ideas in a non-threatening but critical atmosphere; to grow personally through examination of new knowledge and skills and to acquire different approaches to fulfill my project's potentials; to know that others experience the same joys and frustrations that I do; to be part of a group with common goals even though specific project objectives differ; to talk and listen and talk some more." This was the real story and stuff of network sharing; this was the human dimension upon which the network's material productivity depended. Sharing was of major importance in the network's 1978-1981 objectives:

- Objective 1--*Develop and implement a strategy which provides for information sharing among boards of directors at three levels:*
 - a. *to meet a unique need of one project*
 - b. *to help resolve a problem shared by a cluster of Far West Network projects*
 - c. *to provide information or technical assistance for staff members of all projects*
- Objective 2--*Develop a process for the validation of the products and practices that emanate from network projects so that dissemination is appropriate.*
- Objective 3--*Develop and implement a strategy which provides for information sharing among the deans of institutions of higher education with Teacher Corps projects. The emphasis will be on institutionalization of successful products and practices emanating from their own or other Teacher Corps projects.*

Conferences, seminars, board meetings made sharing possible. At what cost? In dollars, approximately \$15,000 for each two-day directors' meeting held at Seattle, the most cost-effective site. Obviously, travel costs for the network's membership, which stretched north from Arizona to Alaska, and west from Idaho and Nevada to American Samoa and the Trust Territories, consumed huge amounts of the network's budget. There were other costs, too--human costs.

Verbatim transcripts taken from documentation/evaluation reports indicated that some content and delivery methods used in network-wide conferences or workshops weren't always valuable to all participants. Board members, themselves, voiced the same opinion at times despite

the fact that the board members consistently worked together to plan network activities. So there were human costs, but those costs were expressed in terms of valuable and shared self-criticism. The costs were productive in themselves for they helped the board sharpen its thinking with respect to future activities. Board members seemed to understand that the types of criticisms they heard and shared were endemic in a network--which by definition does not have members with identical interests or objectives. Thus the self-criticism resulted in productive rather than disruptive tension.

Section V: Why Did It Work?

Neither the dollar costs nor the human costs in terms of patience and perseverance were sufficiently powerful to outweigh the benefits which network members felt. So they persisted despite the five time zones which separated them, the very different types of clientele they served, and the differing objectives they pursued. And they made their network a success. Why?

There may be some truth in the speculation that the Far West Teacher Corps Network succeeded because of the adversities it faced. Geography worked against it and so, too, did time; members were separated by immense distances, and when they gathered they had relatively little time in which to conclude their work together. Though it is no more than speculation, it may be that the adverse geographic/time relationship which members faced was no adversity at all. For that relationship may have imposed stimuli and pressures on the members to work cooperatively together and accomplish as much as possible and as quickly as possible, thus strengthening the members' interdependence and their network.

Whether this speculation is valid or not, it is true that the successful network needs the services of a skilled administrator whose responsibilities are "to bring and keep together people of different talents, or help them grow and develop, to be sensitive to new problem areas that need to be addressed by the network, and to be the score-keeper."⁹ Within the Far West Network, that administrator was called an executive secretary, and that role is described in Chapter 2 with additional references in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 1

Footnotes

- ¹Taylor, Carrie, National Network Coordinator. Memorandum to Coordinators of Teacher Corps Networks, April 22, 1975.
Savitch, Len, Acting Coordinator, Far West Teacher Corps Network. Memorandum to Board of Directors, Far West Teacher Corps Network, June 17, 1975.
- ²Walker, Paul R., Executive Secretary, Far West Teacher Corps Network. Memorandum to Board of Directors, Far West Teacher Corps Network, September 27, 1978.
- ³Miles, Mathew B. "Planned Change and Organizational Health: Figure and Ground" in Carlson, Richard O., et al., Change Processes in Public Schools. Eugene, Oregon: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1966, 11-34.
- ⁴Cohen, Saul B. & Porentz, Elizabeth. "Networking: Educational Program Policy for the Late Seventies." EDC News, Fall 1977, 10, 2.
- ⁵Goddu, Roland. Far West Network Impact Study: Final Report. April 1978.
- ⁶Miles, op. cit.
- ⁷Goddu, op. cit.
- ⁸Goddu, op. cit.
- ⁹Cohen & Porentz, op. cit.

CHAPTER 2

The Executive Secretary's Role

Paul Ford
Walt Le Baron
Paul Randy Walker

Section I: Need

There is a body of literature which deals with the theory and practice of networking. There is, however, relatively little written about network managers and their roles. Sarason considered the role of manager very important in network establishment, maintenance, and productive growth.¹ Cohen and Borenz have also noted the role's significance.² As we consider the basics learned from Teacher Corps networking and the future potentials of networking, it seems most appropriate to consider the role of network manager/executive secretary.

A network, as described in this monograph, is a confederative, self-help organization bound together by the need to share knowledge and skills in the pursuit of common, though not identical, goals. To function in this manner, a network needs a manager to bring people together and to help those people keep working together in a collaborative relationship; this means that the manager must have skills in people-oriented relationships. Similarly, a network needs a manager to make the physical arrangements required to support collaborative goal achievement; the manager must have skills in "thing"-oriented relationships such as the organization and management of physical resources. Some one person in a network must be responsible for organizing people and physical resources; for our purpose that individual is called an executive secretary.

As we review the history of Teacher Corps networking and pursue its potential for future development, it seems appropriate to examine the executive secretary's role with respect to people-oriented relationships and "thing"-oriented relationships. Obviously the two are interrelated, but for clarity they are treated discretely here.

Section II: People-Oriented Relationships

Persons who become involved with forming or joining a network are themselves innovators who see the necessity for an alternative to the present system (or a need to circumvent bureaucracy--turfdom and segmentation of resources) as a basic condition for change. Schon points to a number of roles which are found within the network and which help to make the network innovative or, in his words, a "learning system." These roles are essential to the design, creation, negotiation, and management of both ad hoc and continuing networks, and include:

Systems Negotiator: The guide by which others negotiate a difficult, isolated, rigid or fragmented system. The systems negotiator provides organization, design, and placement of the informal system (network) among the permanent systems who must cooperate for its purposes.

Underground Negotiator: Through personal relationships this person maintains a coherent operation...sometimes pursuing in this way functional goals that have little or nothing to do with the formal policies of the agencies involved.

Maneuverer: This person is able...to persuade or coerce institutions to make the shifts required to realize a project that cuts across critical elements of the system to be dealt with. Through it, the maneuverer is able to connect those seeking particular skills, powers or entrees, with the persons capable of providing them.

Network Manager: The manager oversees official networks of activities and elements, assuring the flows of information...required for network operations.

Facilitator: This person attempts to foster the development and interconnection of regional enterprises, each of which constitutes a variant of central themes of policy or function.³

Schon concludes his description of the network person:

For these reasons, people capable of playing network roles frequently occupy places in several of the subsystems among which they operate. They sustain many organizational identities, and exist on the margins of institutions. They are, in effect, marginal men (sic), with both the negative connotations (of not being central) and the positive connotations (of being in the forefront) suggested by the term. Often this marginality has its compensation through membership in an extensive interpersonal network which serves both the needs of brokerage and personal security.⁴

By implication, Schon's analysis makes clear that a network executive secretary must have the people-relationship skills to work with network members who typically shun bureaucratic organization. Consequently, the successful network executive secretary must be a person of skill in working outside hierarchical structures and within a collaborative organization in which the maverick is quite likely to be the norm! Herein rests a major difference between a network executive secretary and the school or university administrator who occupies a position in a reasonably well-defined bureaucracy. To complicate further the executive secretary's role, his constituency of project directors and deans tends to occupy dominant roles on their home campuses, at least with respect to governance of their projects or schools of education. These people are likely to express that dominance in network board meetings and other activities. For this reason, the executive secretary must be a special kind of person!

The executive secretary's people-relationship skills are related also to the varied goals of the network's board of directors--the individual Teacher Corps project directors within each network. As described in Chapter 1, the specific goals of directors in the Far West Network varied from those particularly relevant to a native American population in Alaska to a black population in Washington State.

Should a Teacher Corps network seek to continue after federal support is withdrawn, what characteristics relative to people-relationships should it look for in a potential executive secretary? The answer is based on a survey of the literature, and more specifically, on those qualities which marked successful executive secretaries in the nation's twelve networks--including the Far West Network.⁵ The following considerations appear to be important:

An Executive Secretary is Essential to the Establishment and Maintenance of a Network. The executive secretary functions as the catalyst and maintainer of the network's energy flows. Indeed, others may initiate the idea or purpose of the network, but some one person must be designated as lead, even if the network is clearly a "mesh" effort in which all members share equally. The role need not be

full time; indeed, many networks are maintained in an incredibly ad hoc fashion simply through the enthusiasm and charisma of the lead person. Yet when a network attempts to mount formal activities to maintain regular and close communications, some form of remunerated leadership may become necessary. This will be a significant problem for Teacher Corps groups attempting to plan for the future, since the majority of past network activities were formal, sometimes expensive, and initiated often from outside rather than from within the network. The significance and potential of an informal, part-time, lead person should not be underestimated, however, as new forms of network design are considered.

The Executive Secretary Must Have Considerable Rapport With the Potential Members of the Network. Teacher Corps executive secretaries were successful in large part because they understood the Corps from the Washington perspective, as well as from that of individual projects. Their background as project persons was important, and they knew the influences upon the project from state, regional, and professional associations and other groups. Over time, the executive secretary had built close personal relationships and professional contacts with significant individuals in the teacher education community. From this stance, the executive secretary often was able to use personal credibility as a basis for requesting support, assistance, and interaction. These capabilities seemed to mark the successful leader of a network, regardless of its purposes or characteristics.

The Executive Secretary Must Have Skill in Working With Various Clientele. Successful executive secretaries understood the dynamics of organizational change, the subtle interplay of new relationships between deans and project directors, and among deans, superintendents, and community chairpersons. They saw clearly the impact of a project on a host school and university. Consequently, the successful executive secretary was able to assist project directors in meeting the particular conditions and needs of the region.

The Executive Secretary Must Have the Ability to Work Within the Context of Extant Systems, Yet Maintain the Flexibility to Foster Change. This peculiar "change agent/outsider-insider/legitimate authority" paradigm marks the most difficult aspect of the executive secretary's

role. While focusing on the innovation or change, this person must maintain enough closeness to the systems to be changed so that credibility does not suffer. This aspect of the role seems to suggest high level skills in organizational development and sensitivity to institutions and bureaucracies. Successful executive secretaries seemed to evidence these qualities, and where significant change occurred at the network level, it was a result of the subtle ability of the executive secretary to balance those alternative behaviors.

The Executive Secretary Must be Self-Effacing, Nondirective, and Facilitating. The most successful lead persons reported in the literature seemed to be those who got least notice during the operation of the network. While their presence was constantly felt and their facilitating moves were known, they were not particularly interested in self-serving publicity. They tended to be self-effacing, to work quietly behind the scenes, and to use their personal competence and concern as major motivators of others. Within the Teacher Corps experience there was sufficient evidence to indicate that successful executive secretaries possessed these same qualities. The evidence at hand suggests that if the lead person attempts to dominate the network or to use it for purposes other than those shared by the membership, the network will suffer, interest will decrease, and when outside support is removed, the network will not attempt to continue itself.

The Far West Teacher Corps experience indicates that the single most important function of the executive secretary, in dealing with people-relationships, was to insure that a collaborative decision-making process was initiated within the network. This process enabled each project within the network to have equal opportunity to participate in the management of network activities. It supported individual project self-determination, as well as shared movement toward group goals.

Clearly, the Far West experience taught the importance of people-oriented skills as part of the executive secretary's repertoire of behaviors. But, too, it suggested that the successful executive secretary be astute in management of information, adminis-

trative detail, allocation of resources and the other "things" which support group pursuit of common goals.

Section III: "Thing"-Oriented Relationships

The executive secretary's role is to bring people together and keep them together. In Teacher Corps this involved the logistics of arranging various types of interchange among the network's membership and between its membership and Teacher Corps/Washington. It involved establishing mechanisms for interaction between the network and sub-contractors hired by Teacher Corps/Washington to provide the network technical assistance. In working with the multitudes of individuals and agencies participating in network activities, it was and is imperative that an executive secretary be flexible in managing resources.

Management Functions. There are specific management functions which an executive secretary must demonstrate. These are requisite to development and implementation of a comprehensive program within an emerging and constantly changing organization.

- Planning: This function consists of developing common short- and long-term goals and objectives within the framework of a diverse group who have site-specific goals and objectives to meet.
- Needs Assessment: This function consists of developing multiple needs assessment techniques to facilitate planning.
- Group Process: This function consists of working with a diverse group in a positive manner to facilitate goal implementation. In the Far West, this included efficient use of time since the board averaged only four meetings each year.
- Brokering: This function consists of coordinating consultants for the client projects.
- Coordination: This function consists of linking various educational agencies with Teacher Corps missions.
- Communication: This function consists of reporting, informing, and soliciting information from national, regional, and local projects.

Production Functions. There are numerous production or content-oriented functions for which an executive secretary is responsible. Some of these are specific to the particular nature of Teacher Corps network and projects.

- Product Creation: The executive secretary develops products related to pertinent network activities and events such as those described in Chapter 1, Section III.
- Writing: Several styles of writing are necessary: technical writing for developing proposals; writing for reporting and information purposes; and writing for routine office management. In short, the ability to write to and for several different audiences is required.
- Validation: The executive secretary develops mechanisms and techniques to insure that products meet high quality standards. Ordinarily, at the Far West Network, a peer review technique was used. However, as Teacher Corps/ Washington moved to a uniform validation system, the network also began development of a more codified and stringent process to comply with national standards.
- Documentation: The executive secretary develops two types of documentation: Type A documentation consists of tracking and evaluating events and activities; Type B documentation consists of developing the total plan which eventually culminates in a product such as a publication.
- Dissemination: The executive secretary routinely disseminates products, practices, and information. Sometimes the products were received by the network from external sources and disseminated internally. Sometimes the products, practices, and information were developed internally and disseminated to organizations external to the network.
- Demonstration: The executive secretary is often called upon to demonstrate network products and practices to other groups within and outside Teacher Corps. Usually these demonstrations consist of conference presentations to varying audiences within the educational family.

Content Functions. The executive secretary is responsible for conducting and managing conferences, meetings, and seminars to acquaint, inform, and train role groups in specific areas outlined by national Teacher Corps and the board of directors. The process employed by an effective executive secretary to carry out such an activity is described below. That process calls for a significant amount of patience and detail work.

At a quarterly meeting, the full board of directors reviews needs assessment data and decides on a network activity such as a conference to accomplish common goals

and objectives derived from the assessment data. The board also sets global parameters for the substance of the conference. The board's executive committee and the executive secretary meet to refine goals and objectives to determine:

- pre-conference readiness activities
- pre-conference meetings
- the number and substance of pre-conference meetings
- selection of pre-conference reading materials or, if necessary, the development of materials
- consultant selection for conference
- type of documentation to be used
- conference evaluation
- post-conference follow-up activity
- post-conference recommendations for future activity

At a succeeding meeting or by mail or telephone, the full board ratifies or amends the strategy developed by the planning committee.

The role of the executive secretary with respect to the content function is to execute the board's plans. This usually involves the details of developing the pre-conference meeting, printing pre-conference materials, commissioning papers, reaching agreement and briefing consultants, implementing the conference (room rental, travel, logistics, equipment, etc.), conducting the documentation, developing a product, and conducting the post-conference activities.

Section IV: Blending People and "Things"

The successful executive secretary in future Teacher Corps networking activities will have the capabilities to blend people and "things"/resources. This is clear from past Teacher Corps experience, as well as from a review of the literature. These capabilities, taken together, are captured in the following characteristics of the most successful Teacher Corps executive secretaries.

- Communications Agent: The executive secretary is highly knowledgeable and trustworthy in terms of information about the Corps and educational happenings.
- Facilitator: The executive secretary facilitates the plans of the board of directors and the deans' council, providing leadership not by recommending program ideas, but by staging the programs thought important by the governing groups.
- Conference Planner: Since meetings, either for training or other purposes, are extremely important in the

Teacher Corps concept of networking, the executive secretary is expert at logistics, finding sites, arranging travel, and the other mechanics of getting a good conference together.

- Expert on Resources: The executive secretary knows the persons, material, and approaches available in a wide variety of areas related to the Teacher Corps mission. Since most executive secretaries had considerable Teacher Corps project experience, their backgrounds were more important to their success than may be the case in other types of networks.

The executive secretary's role described here reflects the particular needs of the Teacher Corps network under the contract conditions from 1978-1980. There is relevance from this experience for the possible future of a regional network emerging under the aegis of Teacher Corps projects. Consequently, the intent of this chapter has been to deal with key elements within the executive secretary's network role.

CHAPTER 2

Footnotes

¹ Sarason, Seymour B., et al. Human Services and Resource Networks. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971.

² Cohen, Saul B. & Porentz, Elizabeth. "Networking: Educational Program Policy for the Late Seventies." EDC News, Fall 1977, 10, 2.

³ Schon, Donald. Beyond the Stable State. New York: Norton, The Norton Library, 1971, 197-199.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Le Baron, Walt. "The Theory of Teacher Corps Networks." Unpublished contract report on the study of networks, Washington, D.C.: Teacher Corps, 1980.

CHAPTER 3

Network Theory From a Teacher Corps Perspective

Walt Le Baron

Section I: Original Teacher Corps Networks

The concept of networks involving interactions among social service agencies is relatively new, dating perhaps to the early sixties but gaining momentum during the seventies. Networks sprang up in response to several problems: relating usually disparate resources or sources of power; finding alternatives to problems of hierarchy, especially within bureaucratic organizations attempting cooperation; building new support coalitions in relation to the improvement of social service delivery; facilitating the spread of innovations or new ideas from developers to users; and linking broad elements of a "problem environment" so as to make possible a "broad-based solution strategy." The use of networking has become enormously popular, and, indeed, one predictable "wave of the eighties" will be the spread of organizational collaboration in the form of networks.

Teacher Corps began to develop networks in 1974 in response to a request by California project directors for funds to sponsor joint staff training and to develop a position in relationship to competency-based teacher education. Other early efforts included work in New York State and Texas in response to similar needs. Shortly thereafter, at an organizational and conceptual meeting in Sacramento, Teacher Corps/Washington divided its projects into approximately equally sized groups located in geographically contiguous regions to form eleven networks. (The Southern area was later divided to form two networks, thus yielding the present twelve.) As reported by Goddu in a brief survey of these early efforts, the networks had these purposes:

- To allow local Teacher Corps projects in a region to share solutions to problems in the management and development of training programs for teachers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- To allow local Teacher Corps projects in a region to determine what training will most readily

facilitate the identification of problems and the sharing of solutions and resources.

- To provide training opportunities for project personnel, on a network-wide basis, establishing communication between personnel scattered among the different projects in a region.

The networks were funded by national Teacher Corps as an "add-on" to the operational grant of a project university. Authority for management of each network was vested in a board of directors formed of all project directors from each network. Project membership in a network was mandatory. An executive secretary was appointed by each network to manage the network.

This format describes the Teacher Corps geographic networks until 1978. In addition to this type of network, Teacher Corps also established "substantive" networks--the Youth Advocacy Loop, the Research Cluster, and the Southern Consortium. None of these groups had much in common except that they were organized around an important theme. Teacher Corps projects might find themselves members of both a cluster or loop and a geographic network. (The Southern Consortium was a special collaboration of developing institutions concerned with competency-based teacher education but not presently operating Teacher Corps projects. In this respect, the Consortium was unlike the other efforts at networking.) There was considerable effort extended at various times to form other substantive groups particularly in the area of bilingual/bicultural or native American projects. The geographic networks emerged to meet the general needs of the projects, as perceived by national Teacher Corps, and while the loop and cluster networks were successful, they tended to move in specialized directions.

The networks were changed in important ways by federal policy in 1978. They were funded on competitive contracts rather than grants. This meant that, in effect, any project university could bid to have its network based at its own campus. In nearly every instance, however, network headquarters remained on their original campus sites. Contract status, however, meant that the networks were now in the control of Teacher Corps/Washington, and, although the board of directors comprised of project directors was retained, the executive secretary had additional responsibilities to Washington, D.C.

Other significant changes marked a departure from the former network concept. A deans' council was added to each network as a collaborating body. These councils worked positively to involve deans in Teacher Corps issues and to improve communications between project directors and deans as groups concerned with changes in teacher education. The concern for involving deans with project directors reflected the basic emphasis of Teacher Corps/Washington on changes in colleges of education and approaches to teacher education. Each network, through stipulations of the RFP, was assigned a number of "missions" or Washington-initiated activities.² These included developing and operating a validation system for project findings, providing training in institutionalization and documentation, and facilitating meetings held at Washington's request. While the executive secretary remained program developer and communications agent, the role also included managing resources within the network and managing Teacher Corps/Washington initiatives. These changes were important because they tended to modify the original purposes and values of networks at inception.

Section II: Definition of a Network

There is no single definition of a network, yet all writers on the subject have stressed a number of qualities important to understanding its nature. The term "network" comes from anthropology and later sociology where it was used to define interactions among members of a village or similar closely related group. The meaning was extended to cover the spread of ideas as in "communications network" or to suggest a common linking activity (usually purposeful) as with an "influence network." The term was adapted by educators to refer to new interactions among organizations or persons hoping to influence the change process. These organizations might center around one person (referred to as an "ego network") or they might involve the mutual interaction of members (referred to as a "mesh network").³ In either case, these innovative networks were intended as alternatives to the bureaucratic structures defining the educational system, and they made possible the collaboration of concerned persons without reference to impact on the endemic nature of the basic organizations. This aspect

of networking is extremely critical in regard to new developments in education. Through a network approach many groups of people are brought together to deal with a common issue or problem, to have ownership in proposed changes, to consider effective and efficient solution strategies involving collaboration (especially where no single organization can adequately handle the problem), or to assure a broad sharing of ideas, resources, or information related to the implementation of an innovation.

Abstracting from the literature on networks, and based on Teacher Corps experience, the following definition of an ideal network may be postulated:

A network may be defined as a non-hierarchical collaboration of equals who enter into a multi-faceted relationship with others for the mutual benefit of all through the sharing of resources, the improvement of communications, and the support of common ideas and missions.⁴

Some aspects of this definition require comment. Networks are usually non-hierarchical entities. This means that any person or organization which participates in a network shares parity--at least in relation to the definition or purpose of the network.

From another point of view, the network facilitates innovation. Suppose one college of education wants to implement an innovation developed elsewhere, yet has limited resources for the change. It might attract support from a source with expertise and money, and it would need to assure receptivity for the innovation in the schools where teachers from the college would work. Some administrative changes might be necessary in the college or at the schools, and appropriate notification to parents might be encouraged if the innovation were to be accepted. These conditions suggest forming a network for innovation, a new entity among the concerned groups for purposes of communication, resource sharing, and developing strategies of change and implementation. This type of networking has proved useful for establishing innovations in education and related social sciences.

A critical aspect of network membership concerns the feelings of both "getting" and "giving" shared by all participants. Networks are

mutually exploitative, meaning that each member, within the charter of the network, is licensed to seek help and support from all other members of the network. In turn, each member is expected to contribute in an appropriate manner when asked for assistance by others. In these kinds of networks, ground rules are usually necessary to assure some evenness of interaction and mutuality of performance. If one player feels unduly exploited (or underused), the sense of ownership may diminish, or the member may attempt to subvert the network by not participating fully. Such difficulties are avoided by planning frequent interactions among the members and developing an openness which permits discussion of possible problems before they become serious.

In the case of Teacher Corps networks, as defined by Washington in 1978, a number of other characteristics were specified:

The Teacher Corps network is further defined as formal, composed of a fixed membership (projects as represented by project directors and deans); temporal, its duration defined by a contract (created outside the network); directed, its mission determined by the Teacher Corps regulations and program management needs; controlled, its decisions subject to approval by Teacher Corps/Washington; funded (or supported), its monies furnished from outside and not the responsibility of the members; fixed, its context determined geographically by the source; limited, its function determined by needs related to Teacher Corps/Washington (and/or the projects); and exclusive, its membership limited to project directors and deans of project colleges of education.⁵

Each of these factors represented a decision from among a wide array of alternatives for the design of networks. For purposes of the 1978 federal program, this particular array seemed appropriate. It could be argued, however, that some variations might have preserved important characteristics of the earlier networks. Nevertheless, for the most part, the networks achieved their missions and were viewed positively by project directors. If projects consider future continuation of networks, especially under the circumstance of no additional central funding, then successful characteristics of pre-1978 networks might be modified or reintroduced to meet individual needs of individual networks.

Formal or Informal Networks. When the membership of a network is "fixed," either by predetermination or by requirements of joining, the network is known as "formal." If, on the other hand, persons or organizations are free to join because of their interest in the problem or issue provoking the network, it is said to be "informal." There are, of course, degrees in both formality and informality. Teacher Corps networks were initiated to meet particular purposes; limitations were placed on membership. Another networking strategy might have been to maintain the regional collaboration of projects and expand the network to include state education agencies, state professional associations, or any other regional groups concerned with changes in teacher education. Membership to some extent would depend on purpose. If the network saw itself first as a communications vehicle, then it would want a broad membership linked informally. If, however, mutual exploitation and close sharing were part of the intention, then the membership would be somewhat formally linked and limited to those groups who could contribute positively to other members. It might be that the present continuation of project members as the basic network would be practical if these other groups were thought of as "associates" or "contributing" members. Such arrangements depend on the conditions which facilitate network purposes.

The Network as Fixed in Duration. Networks tend to be ad hoc structures. That is part of their strength. They can be erected rapidly in response to a particular problem or issue; when their purpose has been served, they can be disbanded easily because they have not accumulated a great deal of "organizational baggage" or personnel.

Because national funding for Teacher Corps networks has terminated, Teacher Corps project directors will have to make decisions about network continuation. Directors may want to consider network continuation over a time period for approximately the remaining lengths of project grants. Or the directors may want to consider an issue or services orientation and select a time-frame to fit that mode of operation. It seems clear that a Teacher Corps network can continue usefully so long as there is good reason for project directors and/or

deans to be talking with each other--sharing issues and needs related to project management, change in teacher education, and interaction with communities and school systems. The importance of such interaction has been established over the past years of successful network activity.

The Problems of Funding. This issue is crucial to network continuation, mission, and purpose. Funding will have to be provided to replace that being withdrawn by Teacher Corps/Washington. Some projects may have a bit of excess money to support their respective network, but for the most part, funding will have to be sought elsewhere. One important caution is relevant here: funding need not be the prime consideration when network purposes or membership are initially discussed; for frequently, funding alternatives become apparent after agencies have identified common topical concerns and have decided to work together. On the other hand, some networks have been organized simply to make funds available for good purposes by allying persons with an innovation and those with funds.

The Network as Directed. Teacher Corps/Washington redefined network purposes and functions during 1978. It was assumed by Washington that the issues and problems given over to each network were germane to most or all of the projects within the network. To some extent, this was true. In advanced networks, boards of directors fashioned programs and long-range plans which accommodated network project needs, as well as those of Washington. In these networks, direction was given by the board of directors and/or the deans' council, and facilitated by the executive secretary. (In the Far West Network during 1979-80, an executive committee formed of deans and project directors served to unite these two groups for purposes of planning and network management. Direction emerged from the efforts of this committee and gave positive forward movement to the network.) Successful networks seem to have been those which stressed participatory decision making by their members and which enabled members to alter network purposes to meet new needs and conditions.⁶

The Network as Fixed. Teacher Corps/Washington determined that directors and deans would participate in each network at the time

when each project was funded. This condition tended to make each network's membership exclusive.

Some of the above network characteristics help place the Teacher Corps networking experience in perspective. The networks have proved themselves valuable to projects for a variety of reasons. It seems worthwhile to consider a future which builds on this strong experiential base. From this perspective then, some additional aspects of network theory will be considered in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Section III: Other Aspects of Network Theory

In describing networks for innovation in education, Kadushin emphasized that there is always something that passes among the units of a network or a "flow." He found that the understanding of those flows is critical to both the definition of the network and its theory of operation. From an historical analysis of networks, Kadushin concluded that:

Networks are not static systems linking individual social units, but dynamic systems with at least the following kinds of flows which pass through the network: objects, labor, affect, evaluation, knowledge, prescription and opinion, influence, and power.

Networks can include both formally instituted relationships--those with formal rules about particular positions and who may occupy them and how they are to relate to other positions; and informal relationships--those which occur without prescribed rules and regulations.

Networks may involve the analysis of relations between individual persons or between roles.

*Social networks are a result of or are "caused" by some set of forces which act upon people or social units. Thus, certain types of networks result from people's need to exchange valued things. Others result from various role prescriptions, and still others are the consequence of organisational, institutional or social class arrangements.*⁷

Kadushin's "flows" have been referred to by other writers as "types of interactions." An abstraction from various sources yields the following types of flows which are found to some degree within the concept of the Teacher Corps network and may serve as a guide to designing next steps:

Objects: Some networks exist for the sharing or exchange of goods, such as books, audio-visual equipment, etc. This has not been a primary purpose of Teacher Corps networks in the past, although such arrangements have had great impact in some instances. The Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) concept in New York State, for example, was formed for such a purpose. In this instance, groups of contiguous school systems collaborate to share not only materials and equipment, but to provide programs efficiently as a group where no one member could handle either the cost or the effort.

Labor: Teacher Corps networks have not been involved in the sharing of labor directly, but the network has been the exchange medium by which project directors have discovered talents in other projects (special expertise, occasionally persons filling staff requirements, etc.). Project directors find the network a source of productive consultants, and as a result of network exposure, some of these resources become familiar with, and later work for, individual projects. It does not appear, however, that labor has been a major flow.

Affect: Teacher Corps networks have been extremely important as vehicles for developing attitudes, encouraging support for new ideas and trends, sharing feelings among project directors (later deans) about project operations and change, and helping to evolve a common stance among projects on teacher education issues of major significance. Much progress in multi-cultural and the exceptional child areas can be related to the affective value of network programs. It seems reasonable to assume that project directors or deans may support networks as much for their affective value as for their specific aims or purposes.

Evaluation: This area has not been a direct purpose of Teacher Corps networks and probably should not serve as one. Project directors, however, have been able to "sense" where their projects are going by comparison with their peers, and they have developed new strategies for management as a result of these contacts. In this respect, the network has served as an evaluative and leveling mechanism.

When validation was added as a network task, the implication of peer evaluation was added to the network. Procedures developed for this purpose seem enormously complex and have the potential to warp the network from other flows or purposes and the very sensitive interaction of mutual sharing among equals which marks the meetings of the project directors or deans. Validation seems a distinct process unrelated to other network flows such as affect, labor, or training. From another perspective, the validation mission thrusts a hierarchical mode on the

network, one of whose basic tenets is to offer an alternative to hierarchy. Indeed, the networks in their present form are not going to survive long enough to test the implications of their validation thrust, but it may be conjectured that validation activity would cause undue strain. It seems clear from both the Teacher Corps experience and the literature that networks are not able to work at cross purposes and maintain the support of the membership.

Knowledge and Information: An historically important purpose of the network has been the sharing of information and knowledge resources, first, for the relatively limited task of promulgating competency-based teacher education programs, later as a forum for issues related to teacher education and institutional change. In some instances, deans have remarked that the network offers the first opportunity they have had for productive interaction with their peers, and there seems some evidence of cross-fertilization of ideas across projects as a result of shared ideas at network meetings.

While the networks were operating as contracts with Teacher Corps/Washington, a considerable amount of information and knowledge sharing took the form of "top-down" dissemination of information, and the longitudinal flows from the earlier networks were somewhat discouraged. The sharing of ideas among peers seems the most appropriate reason for the network and the most reasonable departure point for network maintenance. Communications can be maintained relatively inexpensively, relatively informally, and consistently, depending only on members' willingness to participate.

Opinion Modification: The network could be an excellent vehicle for testing and molding opinion, especially on issues of national concern. While the networks within the recent experience do not seem to have had an influence commensurate with their importance on Teacher Corps/Washington decision-making, they still represent one of the major sets of groups concerned with policy in teacher education. This area should be exploited. The network can perform a valuable role in providing informed opinion, not only for state or regional decision-makers, but for federal policy and legislation as well.

Influence: It has not been a purpose of Teacher Corps networks to bring political influence to bear on planning issues; indeed, there has been specific stipulation against such action. The network, however, if composed of active leaders within the teacher education community--deans and project directors--functions naturally as an excellent "sounding board" for proposed trends both within the region and from the national

perspective. The combined force of the membership is, or could be, considerable, as compared to other voices within a region. The suggestion here is not necessarily one for political action; rather, as the network emerges as a strong vehicle for intercommunication among educational leaders, it will be taken seriously as a former of opinion and a major influence of future directions in teacher education.

Power: Power has not flowed through Teacher Corps networks, and would be inimical to this particular aspect of network formation. It is not precisely clear how a power network facilitates the implementation of innovation, except that it assists creation of a broad-based supporting environment. The network, however, gains status from collaboration and persuasion, rather than from "owning" power or attempting to broker it. While there are networks for these purposes, they do not seem to represent a fruitful direction for a network based on the strengths of the Teacher Corps experience.

Sharing: For the most part, sharing within a Teacher Corps network has been limited to ideas, programs, and planning, but has not included materials, facilities, personnel or other resources. The critical concept in networking, however, is sharing, and as the network becomes successful, participants learn that they can count on other members for assistance within the context of the network.

Training: The initial purpose for Teacher Corps networks was training, especially for project staff and in areas related to development of competency-based education materials. This focus on training has continued over the years and marks a major mission of the networks. Indeed, network training can be economical and efficient, and it offers the advantage of contact among colleges and school districts. Training is also expensive, and without the funds being provided from outside, participants would find the costs prohibitive. Networks may want to continue planning for some events related to a training function, but their omission should not be considered damaging to the basic concepts governing Teacher Corps type networks.

These areas represent some of the major "flows" within the Teacher Corps networks during the past, and they provide clues to planning possible network continuation. It will be seen that the networks have been exceedingly complex because they have served as channels for a number of flows. Some simplification may be important as a network considers a future without charter or funding from Teacher Corps/Washington.

In general, the literature indicates that there is no preferred way to build and develop networks. Each example, at least within the area of innovative networks for education, seems to have emerged from the particular dictates of the problem. The important motivating principle seems to be the need for new, improved, "unblocked," and collaborative ways of dealing with innovations from their development stages through their implanting in permanent systems. Within the context of this variety, however, a number of elements seem common either to the motivation for, or the design of, all networks. Some of these are discussed below.

An Alternative to Established Systems. Networks seem necessary because typical hierarchical/bureaucratic systems are unresponsive to organizational innovation and the human dimensions strand of organizational life. Teacher Corps networks served to unite project directors and/or deans within a specified region in new forms of communication, interaction, training, and decision-making. In this respect, they represented an alternative to the established system or created an alternative to serve technical and human dimensions needs otherwise not met by humanistic systems. Yet in some important ways, the Teacher Corps networks were a limited alternative since their funding, policy, and operations were directed by Washington. Project directors and deans found an opportunity for exchange of ideas, but not for sufficient expansion of their problem environments.

An important discussion area for future network planning will be the degree to which a potential network represents a necessary and useful alternative to established systems within the area of teacher education and/or organizational change. Several aspects of such an alternative seem clear:

The network should expand to use all resources, interest groups, and concerned individuals within a geographic area, not just the Teacher Corps bloc. In this way, the initial networking effort can become a focus for broad-based action towards change in teacher education.

Representatives of vested interests can use the network as a forum for discussion, action, and change within the context of the specific problem area (e.g., teacher education) without having to be concerned with endemic change in the sponsoring organization.

The nature of the alternative should be in the areas of improvements in communication systems, organizational linkages, interpersonal interactions, and sharing of information, resources, and solution strategies, not in the context of alternatives to the extant permanent systems. (In other words, the intent is cooperation and focuses on specific issues, not on the building of competitive structures.)

The network as an alternative will probably remain ad hoc, changing its focus and probably its membership as problem areas shift within the general theme. This must be viewed as a strength rather than as a loss of control by some elements or a competition among various members.

The network should seek to foster collaboration and sharing among units which are normally viewed, or view themselves, as competitive.

The network, as it emerges, grows, and becomes useful to its members, finds ways to involve a broad spectrum of concerned parties. If a number of groups have been working independently on the same or similar problems, linking through a network provides a means of sharing so that energies can be directed productively towards common goals rather than segmented by uncoordinated efforts. If the network has been successfully established, the partners in it will feel the relationship to be mutually exploitative, mutually cooperative, and beneficial.

A Sense of Community and Shared Purpose. Through the author's observation of network meetings, board of directors' meetings, deans' councils, and other network activities over the past several years, it has been possible to note the growth of a sense of community and shared purpose. The groups within any given network see themselves as contributing to the general improvement of teacher education within their area, serving as exemplars for other universities and school systems, and developing products which should have general useability. In this context, the network has provided an expression for feelings of common purpose. But the question may be asked, what will hold the network groups together in the future, especially if there is no further funding from Washington?

Teacher Corps networks have offered an important option within the higher education community which seems to have broad applicability

for continued improvement in teacher education. The following are elements upon which networks have developed and which have significance for future network development:

The exportability of project developments/products requires preparation of the environment beyond the participating institutions.

Problems and issues of project management will continue and each project director benefits from the support of colleagues through network participation.

Publication of information, findings, and insights through the types of documents developed by networks will continue to be important for project directors, but as cooperative, hence increasingly impactful, ventures.

New forms of interaction, e.g., deans' councils, boards of directors, have provided important prototypes.

Regional definitions of problems have served as a useful guide to long-range planning in many instances, as a check against parochialism, and as a basis for improved use of resources.

The free flow of information is essential to the development of effective networks. One important benefit from networks is psychological support, knowing that others are struggling with the same problems, issues, and constraints which seem insurmountable at times within the home environment. Open information sharing leads to each member's feeling supported by the common knowledge that all members of a network face similar difficulties, frustrations, and seeming alienation from the bureaucratic system opposed to innovation. This function of networks, the development of community for innovators, is critical for the furthering of change.

Voluntary and Equal Participation. Most networks are based on voluntary participation, and in this respect, Teacher Corps networks were unusual in that all project directors were assigned to a specific state or geographic network as a condition of receiving a grant. Nevertheless, there seemed to be little difficulty with required membership. Without federal funding, future membership in Teacher Corps networks will be voluntary and based on the interests of project directors and/or deans. In any case, membership must imply equality if the network is to be successful. Under some circumstances, some members

may wish to share in governance (possibly because of a contribution to funding) but involve others in a non-governing mode. Such arrangements should be clearly indicated by listing others as "associate members" or otherwise making the membership distinction clear.

Section IV: Practicalities

A network needs a coordinator or executive secretary to bring people together to work on concerns of mutual interest. That role was described in Chapter 2. There are other practicalities that require attention if a network is to be effective and efficient.

Network Meetings. Do networks have to be based on meetings? For the most part the Teacher Corps networks involved regular meetings of the board of directors and/or deans' councils, programs of training or information involving numbers of project staff and/or other persons, and special training events for project staff, principals, or others within the project universities. There seemed to have been many meetings designed either by the individual network or determined necessary by Washington. At times the quality of meetings was questioned, and the relationship of a meeting's purpose to a project's immediate needs was not clear. Yet, while these criticisms have been recorded, the vast majority of network events were useful to participants, demanding in terms of participation, and directed towards innovation and change within the project environment. Attendees went home with new ideas and new understandings about the purposes and directions of Teacher Corps.

Sarason has said that "network meetings are the most important test of how well theory and practice are wedded."⁸ He saw meetings as crucial for maintaining face-to-face contact among members of the network so that business could be transacted directly. At the same time, both Sarason and others have pointed out that network meetings need not require the attendance of the same persons at all times, nor the representation of the same institutions. Networks should be flexible, evaluating organizations, and unless attendance is prescribed, as in the Teacher Corps experience, members of a network should feel free to pick and choose when and for what purpose they may attend network events. The Teacher Corps experience revealed that

meetings might be important for a number of purposes. Some of these are discussed below in terms of their relationship to general network theory.

Board of Directors'/Deans' Council Meetings. Network governance was provided through these meetings. Sometimes they were held in conjunction with a network conference or training event. Usually all project directors or deans attended. A chairperson directed the meeting, and the executive secretary participated as an observer, expert, or manager of proposed activities. While the meetings tended to be formal, there was normally little hostility and a high degree of cooperation. Occasionally, factions developed among members of boards of directors, and compromise was arranged by the executive secretary or the chairperson. Deans, having less experience with their councils, spent more time than directors on information matters, getting acquainted with each other, and questioning the impact or purpose of their meetings.

Most formal networks provide meetings for purposes of governance. Depending on the degree of formality, there may be a constitution, by-laws, or other regulations. Since networks tend to maintain an informal and flexible approach to organization, representing an alternative to bureaucracy, there is a tendency by network participants to shy away from such formalism. Regular, frequent, face-to-face contact seems to limit the need for such structure, and since membership is voluntary and based on mutuality of purpose, there appears little need to develop elaborate rules of order. In any event, participative governance is essential for the network when it is concerned with innovation and institutional change.

Network Training Conferences. Teacher Corps used the networks for training to an extent not otherwise reflected in descriptions of networks for innovation and change. Conferences were developed based on needs determined by the board of directors (sometimes with the assistance of the deans' council) or were delivered as "packages" from sources prescribed by Teacher Corps/Washington. The quality of these training events varied but were generally meaningful and productive.

Training conferences or similar events do not seem a requisite for network success unless, of course, such training is established

as a network purpose. Such meetings may be expensive, require considerable travel if network participants are distant from each other, and are not necessarily related to processes of network communication and change efforts. This is not to say that the Teacher Corps-funded training was not a valuable experience; rather, it suggests that in the reformulation of networks, training, though desirable, need not be considered a primary focus, especially if funds are short.

Network Project Intervisitations. In the Far West Network, project directors selected other sites within the network and were able to visit these projects through sponsorship of the network. Reports on these visits were prepared and later shared with the board of directors. The major advantage of these intervisitations was the opportunity to observe a different site with similar activities, while the host project director was provided feedback on project operations. These meetings were generally kept informal, closely personal, and developed to meet the needs of the participants on a particular visit. They were excellent for emphasizing the network experience by involving participants in close, meaningful interactions. The visits provided an alternative to large training events.

These project intervisitations are consistent with general network theory in that they stress close meetings of various network participants but do not require the attendance of all members. The technique is particularly useful when it is unreasonable for members at geographic extremes to travel frequently to the center of an opposite extreme. By reporting the event, the meeting is shared with nonparticipants and, thus, becomes a part of the general network information base. Facilitation is accomplished by the network lead person (executive secretary), who provides for sharing of reports and general information about the events which take place. Costs can be kept at a minimum if such visits are scheduled in conjunction with travel for other purposes.

Visits by the Network Lead Person. When two or more projects were relatively close to each other, but some distance from other members of the network, it was reasonable for the lead person to visit them. The governing consideration of such visitations, however, is network purpose and the proposed outcome of such meetings.

There are other options for meetings. Those options presented so far are based primarily on the Teacher Corps experience and the consideration that network members are separated by considerable distance, each from the other and all from the center. Many networks, however, involve persons or institutions which are in close proximity, perhaps within the same city or locale, and these networks can afford frequent, informal, and varied meetings. As distance increases, so does the difficulty of arranging face-to-face contact.

Conclusions With Respect to Meetings. A number of general conclusions emerged from the Teacher Corps experience with meetings. While there may be a considerable reduction in opportunities for meetings in the future, some of these conclusions may be useful for planning:

Network conferences and training events seemed more successful if resources from within the network were involved in planning and delivering programs than when the "package" was developed outside the network and delivered through network sponsorship, even when the board of directors had established the need for the program.

Programs which stressed the interaction of participants as groups, especially across project lines, seemed to have the greatest impact on participants by providing opportunities to use knowledge as it was received and by opening the avenues to new professional contacts.

The use of speakers--one-to-many presentations--particularly one after the other, led to disinterest on the part of the audience.

"Ice-breakers" and other group dynamics techniques helped to build a sense of intergroup communication and relieve the tension felt by new participants in network events.

Regular adjustments in the conference based on analysis of participant feedback after each session permitted meeting participant needs more directly than could be predicted prior to the meeting.

When meetings maintained a tone of pleasant informality, participants felt more at ease and gained more from the experience than when meetings were regimented. Informal discussions with presenters were particularly important in this regard.

When possible and reasonable, the use of educational settings, especially those of some interest in terms of innovations or change, should be considered for

meetings, rather than the use of hotel facilities. In this manner, participants are provided opportunities for site observation, as well as presentations.

Varying conference participants by permitting attendance of alternate staff members or persons from outside the project staff built support for the project and understanding of the Teacher Corps. Such a process would be useful in terms of any innovative effort.

While emphasis has been placed on the importance of network meetings and their careful planning, it should not be assumed that networks must have meetings or other formal events. Meetings depend on purpose and the needs of the network for regular encounter. There is considerable literature which suggests that face-to-face interaction is the surest way to build enthusiasm and support for an innovation, but there does not seem to be a similar concern that support networks require such attention. As the future unfolds, network organizers should consider alternatives to meetings as the major cohesive force of networks, especially when the membership is separated by considerable distance.

Other Types of Network Interaction. When it is not possible to have meetings, or when members of a network are too busy with other activities to find the time for frequent meetings, a number of other forms of communication are useful. Again, the nature and practicality of these means depends on the purposes of the network. But when distances are great and there is not a requirement for the intensity of interaction provided by frequent face-to-face contact, the alternatives may be useful for maintaining the sense of the network interaction.

Newsletters. Teacher Corps networks found the newsletter quite useful for disseminating information, describing project developments, and introducing personalities within the network. Short, substantive articles on innovations were well received. Some newsletters were quite formal, carefully edited, and expensively produced. Others were less expensive, more frequent, and less formal. The important aspect of the newsletter seems to have been that it reminded all parties to the network of the network's existence, brought news of happenings elsewhere, and provided a sense of cohesiveness among network participants. Within the Teacher Corps experience, the newsletter was not

used to compensate for a reduction in meetings, but it might have been designed with this purpose in mind. It served this function in other networks and, indeed, in the area of educational innovation, the newsletter is becoming an important communications vehicle.

Publications Program. Teacher Corps networks usually developed publications based on work within the network, reflecting major themes within the Corps. Those documents were published with funds provided through the network contract. The advantage of publications from the networking point of view is that they provide a means of cooperative effort and inter-network communication not dependent on distance or travel. Many persons have the opportunity to contribute directly to such publications and, thus, network cohesiveness can be reinforced through design of the publications. Attention, however, must be given to the selection of topics and writers so as to assure that experts are reporting on first-hand experience.

Letters and Other Communications From the Executive Secretary.

A "one-to-many" form of disseminating information is the "open" letter approach from the executive secretary or network leader. A similar purpose is served by the "round robin" letter. Such techniques are useful for communicating information, sharing governance problems, or making members aware of important network events and duties. The executive secretary may also find that network cohesiveness can be built by using personal communications on a regular basis to compensate for a lack of face-to-face meetings. This technique does not seem to have been used as much in the Teacher Corps experience as within other forms of networks. The reason may be that Teacher Corps conferences and other meetings were sufficiently frequent to provide for member needs.

Telephone Contacts. Phone calls are less expensive than meetings, more expensive than letters. They have the advantage of immediacy, and if used judiciously, can be useful for the exchange of information. Phone contacts appear to be particularly useful among clusters of network members rather than throughout the entire network, and they seem to depend on prior personal contact. Of course, over large distances the phone connection becomes less reasonable, and its major disadvantage

is that no records are maintained of the meetings. Information may be misconstrued in the retelling. There is not much evidence from the literature on the use of telephone contacts for maintaining networks concerned with innovation and change. Usually, they have other purposes, including information dissemination, alerting clients to new opportunities (or dangers), or maintaining surveillance (i.e., daily calls to invalids to assure their welfare).

Section V: Conclusion

This chapter has set forth network theory with particular respect to its importance for Teacher Corps. Our major conclusion is that networking, in the past, has been valuable in advancing the purposes of local Teacher Corps projects. Similarly, even though centralized federal funding of Teacher Corps networks has ceased, there are sufficiently powerful characteristics to be found within network theory and the Teacher Corps experience to justify further exploration of networking by local Teacher Corps projects.

CHAPTER 3

Footnotes

¹Goddu, Roland, ed. Networks: A Review of the Teacher Corps Theory and Practice of Networks for Supporting Local Projects, 1972-1977. Washington, D.C.: Teacher Corps, 1978, 2.

²The "RFP," or Request for Proposals, is the governmental means for obtaining responses to needed services. Successful proposals become contracts within the limits established by the RFP. In the case of the Teacher Corps RFP, much attention was given to activities and specific communications processes within the networks. Usually an RFP states objectives, and it is the responsibility of the contractor to determine the best methods for their achievement. In this respect, the RFP's considerably limited freedom of proposers to plan situation-specific responses to determined needs.

³Sarason, Seymour B., et al. Human Services and Resources Networks. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971.

⁴Le Baron, Walt. "The Theory of Teacher Corps Networks." Unpublished contract report on the study of networks, Washington, D.C.: Teacher Corps, 1980.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Based on data collected from five of the twelve Teacher Corps networks in conjunction with the above study.

⁷Kadushin, Charles. "On the Problem of Formalizing Emergent Networks Among Innovators in Education." Undated, unpublished draft from a conference on networks sponsored by NIE, 1978, 2.

⁸Sarason, op. cit., 5.

CHAPTER 4

Design of Future Teacher Corps Networks

Walt Le Baron

The previous chapter presented a theoretical approach to networking based on the Teacher Corps experience supplemented with references to the literature. This chapter continues that discussion. It emphasizes action steps for assuring the continuation of networks, if project directors and/or deans seek that continuation despite termination of direct federal funding for networks.

Section I: Potential Network Purposes

Networks exist for a myriad of purposes. Their form follows somewhat their particular function. While Teacher Corps networks have been concerned with the problem of change, they have served other purposes: information dissemination, training, management of procedures developed by Washington, validation (at least emerging), and informal social interaction among Corpsmembers. All of these functions have some value. But as a network takes on numerous functions, its purposes and the interaction among its members may become confused. Consequently, there should be a continuous questioning of its purposes and interaction among its membership. This questioning has been a major function of the board of directors and/or deans' councils within recent Teacher Corps experience.

At this time two purposes seem feasible for the future direction of networks based on Teacher Corps experience. These are purposes which stress development and dissemination of innovations from projects and those which foster collaboration of a broad segment of persons and organizations concerned with teacher education. These purposes are not incompatible, and they may be operable without large central funding.

Development and Dissemination of Project Innovations. The network should serve as a project-directed vehicle for assisting the spread of innovations from developer sites to other projects and then to other sites beyond projects. This pattern is similar to that

proposed by the National Diffusion Network. But the suggestion here is that networks take responsibility for analyzing the particular situation in which they find themselves and determining what measure of self-help (within the context of local resources) would be useful, practical, and supported by the networking concept.

The basic relationship among projects within a Teacher Corps network is this common interest in change and innovation, although the form of change may vary widely across project sites. Change efforts require support, and provision of such support can become an important rationale for the continuance of the networks. Such a mission permits designing network activities which are reasonable within resource constraints; the major focus becomes maintenance of communications for transfer of project-produced information. In addition, project directors maintain a formal link with others for support, problem solving, "hand holding," and developmental activities--the community building and psychological support aspects of networks mentioned as significant for their success. From such a perspective, the network can be seen as a logical extension of earlier efforts within Teacher Corps, but now building on field experience rather than national program considerations.

Collaboration Among Teacher Education Elements. The second purpose is compatible with the first, but stresses the collaboration of elements beyond the Teacher Corps project, including state education representatives, state professional associations, interested private citizens, other departments of project universities, and, indeed, non-Teacher Corps colleges and universities, legislative committees, and proprietary organizations. In sum, anyone or any group concerned with teacher education could opt to become a member of the network. The initial Teacher Corps project group would be viewed as the network sponsor but would redefine its mission as providing a forum for discussion of issues, spread of innovation, and support of new institutions attempting change or innovation. In this manner, the network would take major responsibility for building a constituency within the region (or on a state-by-state basis within the region) for teacher education. Agreement on substantive issues would not be necessary;

rather, a concern for improved preservice and inservice would unite members, as would a commitment to broad-based planning for program improvements.

Both of these purposes suggest a mode of the "network as learning system," and this should be a major concern for new directions. As new collaborations are employed in the solution of complex problems, it may become possible to evolve principles of organization which will be applicable to the institutions contributing to the network. Since the flexible nature of the network provides for a relatively flexible approach to both membership and solution strategies, it becomes possible for the network to be more adaptable than the host institutions to events within the environment. Designing processes for transfer becomes a major next task, but the emergence of the network in these directions appears a profitable and reasonable extension of Teacher Corps experience applied to regional problems and needs.

Section II: Background for Decisions About Continuing a Network

As a basis for exploring network continuation, a brief questionnaire was sent in 1980 by the executive secretary to project directors and deans in the Far West Network. Unfortunately, the return was limited. Responses received were useful in developing baseline information and tended to reflect some differences of opinion. The sections which follow are based on the answers to the five questions, but are "fleshed out" with ideas from other efforts to study Teacher Corps networks.

Should the network, in some form, continue, given that problems of funding can be worked out? Answers ran the gamut from strong enthusiasm to undecided, but there was no indication that funding would be available and there was no suggestion that a project or university could provide funds. (One project director did indicate that, given some firm direction, funds might be found within the university for limited participation.) There was a sense that the network in its present form was ready for change, having succeeded with its present mission, and that unless new directions were developed, enthusiasm would be limited. A sense of collegiality for project directors, as well as the opportunity for directors to share information, was seen as valuable to network continuation.

The problem of recentering the network from a Washington-oriented towards a group-directed activity was not mentioned. It appears that such refocus will be the major task if a decision is made to continue. In this respect, the projects can form the basis for a new effort, but there is not inherent in the present structure the germ of reincarnation. A bit like the phoenix, a network might emerge from the ashes of the former effort, stronger perhaps for this experience, but not necessarily directly related to or dependent upon the former developments. And here arises an interesting dilemma in the formation of temporary systems: The network, created to meet purposes espoused by Teacher Corps/Washington and supported within the context, nevertheless has no substantial roots from which to predict continuance once that support and purpose are removed. In other words, no strategy for continuance was inherent in the network design, and without such a strategy, any group--even project directors--is really starting from scratch.

What would be lost without the network? For projects it might be conjectured that the following items would be missed as a result of network discontinuance:

- Training sessions for project staff
- Publications and opportunities for publicity, reporting of project developments
- A support system (both psychological and structural) for project directors
- The deans' council which was beginning to establish itself as important and meaningful for deans
- The nexus of deans/project directors interacting purposefully
- An important communications link (and one highly trusted) for information from Teacher Corps/Washington and other sources about future directions of the Corps
- A collaborative decision-making process involving peers and emphasizing new forms of decision making
- Interaction by project staff with resources and peers from other projects and the building of personal influence networks
- The sharing of problems and developing of mutual support systems
- A process of brokering resources and finding quality assistance for the project

An opportunity to make a regionally important statement on issues of teacher education either nationally or from the state perspective

It is curious in light of this rather lengthy listing of network benefits that the response for continuation was limited. One would have anticipated greater interest in preserving the network for at least some of these reasons.

Would your institution be willing to provide some funding if asked to do so? What sorts of benefits would be expected in return for support? (Please conjecture here even though, at the moment, funding may not seem possible.) There was no willingness to commit funds for the continuation of networks. One response mentioned "in-kind" contributions, but it was not clear how these might serve the needs of network continuation. Some respondents stated that project funds were already too tight, and they indicated a general willingness to consider other sources. Thus, while at least some project directors and deans reported benefits from network involvement, apparently these benefits were not seen as sufficiently strong to merit local support for the network. The issue, however, may have been the "tight money" situation of higher education at the moment rather than any direct result of the network principle. Nevertheless, if a network seeks to restructure itself, it cannot assume that the institutions currently hosting Teacher Corps projects will easily and readily provide funds.

It is worth conjecturing what will be lost in terms of high-cost and low-cost items as a result of non-funding.

High-Cost Network Activities

Staff training conferences

Publications

Travel for board of directors'/deans' meetings

Newsletters (especially fancy ones)

Conferences to meet requirements of Teacher Corps/Washington

Support of network office and executive secretary

Low-Cost Network Activities

Telephone contacts among project directors

Letters and informal newsletters

Sharing of project products by directors and/or deans
 Non-personal establishment of contacts by project staff
 with peers in other projects
 Meetings which "hitchhike" on national conferences or
 other times when project staff are together
 Contacts with professional associations, officials, and
 others concerned with teacher education
 Listings of resources, publications, and consultants who
 have been found useful for project problem solving
 Interproject visitations (if in conjunction with other
 travel)

The value of examining such benefits perhaps provokes a new sense of network importance and the nature of resources which might be devoted to maintaining a network.

What other groups IHE's, associations, SEA's, persons, resources, etc., might be included in the network because (1) you would find the contact useful; (2) their support would increase the stance of the network; or (3) they might have funding? Responses to this question were inconclusive. One person felt the network was a close-knit group and would lose by expansion rather than gain. Groups mentioned for inclusion were SEA's, teacher associations, teacher centers on a state or regional basis, professional groups such as the state AACTE, or chief state school officers. One suggestion was that networks might become a forum for policy shaping and, thus, include all those groups concerned with educational policy. This would be an interesting direction and quite diverse from the Teacher Corps network roots. No one suggested any group which might contribute a solution to the funding issue or increasing the stance of the network.

It seems clear that the issue of membership must be accompanied by a consideration of purpose and future direction. Perhaps in the beginning, assuming a willingness of project directors to continue the network, membership might be severely limited until objectives were determined. The advantage to such a process is that it creates two levels of members: founders and associates, and this condition tends to mitigate equality of decision-making.

Is it reasonable to think that other groups might want to join in a network approach to communications and mutual problem solving? As

it becomes increasingly evident that problems are complex and that collaboration must be developed among diverse elements within the same problem structure, the development of networks appears to be a major strategy for improving responsiveness to issues. Since Teacher Corps has had experience in this area, it would seem a waste for project directors to default on potentially valuable opportunity for leadership within the teacher education community. This somewhat idealistic approach, however, does not answer project directors' real world problems of funding, shortage of time and other resources, and possible conflict with other responsibilities.

One curious aspect of this set of responses was failure to mention local education agency resources and/or organizations related to the LEA (with the exception of the teachers' associations). Apparently, the Teacher Corps network was viewed only as an agent of higher education, a reasonable conclusion based on experience, but not necessarily a condition associated with network redesign. Again, the question of purpose and span of control emerges. Networks are closely working groups of limited size, usually with personal contacts among members, and there are limits to the degree to which networks can be reasonably expanded.

What purposes would the network serve (especially in terms of needs which are otherwise not being met)? Answers to this question tended to reflect present network practice without any particular discrimination. The idea of a policy-shaping body was reiterated and linking with other organizations was repeated. One particular difficulty with this question seemed to be a lack of discrimination among potential network purposes, although the brief answers provided did not permit speculation on what rationale supported them. The failure to discriminate among purposes may have occurred because it is difficult to generate purposes for the network separate from consideration of the funding source.

Perhaps a major effort should be to limit the purposes of continuing networks to some reasonable number of expectations, especially in the areas of communication, interpersonal support, and linkage with other teacher education resources. Such an agenda would provide

sufficient challenge for project directors if they wished to continue networks, yet would simplify the task by setting reasonable and, perhaps, attainable boundaries.

What benefits from our experience over the past several years would you see as most attractive to others? Why? Responses in this area were limited but included the general concept of networking, collegial interaction, training, and information sharing. The network was perceived as useful for these types of activities and presumably respondents saw others as benefiting from them. The "why" question was not answered at all! Most of the benefits mentioned require funding at the type of level provided by an outside sponsor (Teacher Corps/Washington). Hence, continuation of these activities would be otherwise difficult. Thus, the resource issue becomes the controlling influence on both the type of network and its impact on others.

Section III: How to Get a Network Started

Suppose that the concept of networking has become implanted, and a group of project directors want to continue the present network or recast one to suit their particular needs. How would they go about initiating one? Guidelines from the literature, as well as five years of Teacher Corps experience, suggests a number of steps to be undertaken in reformulation of networks. This section suggests some important considerations for initiating and maintaining a network.

Networks Begin With Important Ideas or Concerns Related to Change and Innovation. The literature makes clear that any successful network of the Teacher Corps variety was begun because important ideas required the collaborative effort of the persons who eventually became involved with the network. Teacher Corps networks began when groups of project directors reached common concern about staff training and teacher education problems and began communicating with each other over ways to meet their needs. (It may be, too, that networks last only so long as the ideas bringing persons together remain relevant and powerful enough to attract their attention.) But, not all members of the network may sense that all issues are of equal importance.

Most initial network efforts seem to be informal and ad hoc even though the network may later take on formal and perhaps permanent characteristics. When networks are deliberately initiated as in the case of Teacher Corps, the "ground rules" are established by the sponsor who sets operational guidelines. Such networks tend to gain the respect of their members so long as network activity is seen as relevant to local needs. Some information networks have been established by parties interested in promoting a single innovation, and these networks have had similar funding and support results.

The "worthiness" of the idea will determine interest in the network and commitment to it. Usually, an idea which is too abstract will not form the basis for cooperative effort. For example, "teacher education" is too general, while "bringing pressure for the passage of State Law 401 in kindergarten teacher certification" is probably too narrow to acquire much interest. A concept such as "promoting improved inservice education for regional teachers" or "developing mutual self-help strategies among project directors" feels about right, especially if the network is to require collaboration of partners over a wide geographical area.

Most networks within the social service areas seem to have an element of "good cause" about them, including improvement of resource use, sharing of personnel, cooperating on service to clients (especially when such service is segmented among various agencies), or improving communications, possibly by joint training or meetings. Other strong ideas include support of innovative sites, dissemination of research findings, cooperation for training and personnel development, and support of project operations. Many of these ideas have been found within Teacher Corps networks. The significant problem remains, however, as to what ideas will develop support among those individuals and organizations which are felt to be important to the developing network.

Some Individual Always Takes the Lead for the Creation of the Network. Except! When networks are mandated, as in the case of Teacher Corps, it is not always possible to find a significant network promoter. The successful executive secretary, however, is still left

with establishment tasks such as organizing project directors and building support, determining priorities for programs (with or at the direction of the board of directors), setting up a network headquarters, and developing communication channels.

Successful network managers seem to be highly energized, highly respected individuals who are committed to a cause. They seem charismatic enough to attract support for ideas and to channel that support towards positive action. As indicated in a previous chapter, they are frequently not members of the establishment, but they are able to move easily within the establishment, yet at the edges so as to promote the changes implied within the network concept. In the re-establishment of the Teacher Corps network, the person selected for leadership (or assuming leadership) should be committed to change and innovation, highly knowledgeable about resources in teacher education, possessed of considerable stature among peers, and able to devote the necessary time and energy to the task of network formation.

When a group of persons initiates the network, or when they develop the significant idea jointly, it is advisable for one member of the group to take responsibility for facilitating progress. Decision making remains a function of the group (as in the Teacher Corps board of directors), but a single focus of responsibility for coordination and information flow is desirable. While some network histories indicate several significant players, there appears to be one person who has held the network together despite competing interests of other members.

Limits on the Scope of the Network are Established. Two types of limits must be established. First, the network must determine that it can handle only a reasonable number of missions. This determination is made with reference to available (or potential) resources, adequate definition of the purpose for initiating the network, and commitment of members. Second, the network must be limited in scope to a reasonable number of individuals or organizations. Size may depend on the degree of interaction required. If regular and close communications are required to further network aims, then fewer persons in a closer space will form the network. On the other hand, networks can

expand to include rather large geographical areas (as was the case with Teacher Corps) or large numbers of persons whose contacts are necessarily limited.

Network initiators should make some decisions about the scope of the activity prior to giving wide publicity to the network. There appear to be no "right" answers to problems in this area, and it is possible to find examples of networks based on nearly all combinations of complexity and interaction. Once a network has become established, these parameters can change without doing injustice to the underlying concepts, but the important consideration at the beginning is reasonableness in span of control.

The Question of Resources Must be Challenged. Sometimes networks are formed so as to garner resources and to make efficient use of those already available. At other times, the concept dictates the need for resources, and the network founders go searching after funds. Perhaps the Teacher Corps largess in establishing relatively cost-free networks has caused a problem for project directors in planning network continuance. Nevertheless, it should be noted that numerous significant network activities can be undertaken on relatively limited resources, again, depending on the purpose of the network. For project directors concerned with maintaining the network as a support system (psychological and mutual problem analysis), many important activities can be undertaken at relatively low cost, some kinds of overhead may be available through the project, and the project university may be persuaded to provide exceptional funding on a short-term basis.

Space, time, travel, and size of membership, as well as purpose and approval, are factors affecting costs. The Teacher Corps network is geographically large, and there is no convenient way to solve the travel problem when face-to-face contact is important. There are, however, a number of alternatives which can be useful in terms of important network aims while not requiring significant resources.

Regularize the Communications Process. Regardless of network scope, mission, and organization, there must be appropriate communication among members on a regular basis. Indeed, a network is

communication, and when some member is uninformed or uninvolved in the communications process, then interest and motivation for continuation in the network wanes. Communications need not be expensive or elaborate. Appropriate forms can be determined by the group initiating the network. The important principle seems to be that all members are kept uniformly informed and involved with network events and developments.

Most reports indicate that the communications responsibility is centered usually with the lead person. Flows are of two types: from the center to all network members or among members without reference to the center (the center being one point on the hub). When the network is new, it is necessary to have some individual take the responsibility for assuring the communications function is performed. Again, the means depend on purposes, scope, and needs of members rather than on any prescription.

Operate the Network. The preliminary establishment work leads directly into operations whether the network is formal or relatively ad hoc. During the operating period, considerable attention must be directed toward maintenance of interest, assuring the meeting of member needs, and checking the mutuality of encounter. If some members give more to a network than they receive, or if some members refuse services to others while accepting them, the network will soon stumble under its own weight. The lead person may serve to monitor these potential problem situations, or a board of directors may determine the adequacy of progress towards objectives.

Network management may be complex, as in the case of Teacher Corps networks, requiring a full-time executive secretary, or it may be no more complicated than a hip pocket operation principally in the mind of one person. Again, purpose and scope dictate what is reasonable and necessary. A network will suffer, however, if one person feels the burden of management responsibilities. If there is no formal means for providing these services, members should find some reasonable way of sharing tasks essential to network survival. This sharing, in turn, can become an important part of the network experience.

Check Out the Effects of the Network and Plan for the Future. One aspect of network development has to do with the concept of the network as a "learning system," an organization which can modify its behavior as a result of experience. The network is capable of such "learning" to a greater degree than a bureaucracy because its structure is flexible and it remains a temporary system comprised of explicit interactions directed toward the achievement of limited objectives. In order to maintain this stance, there must be some regularized status checking of network achievements, progress, and problems. The Teacher Corps networks' boards of directors have provided this function, and through their deliberation they were able to give direction to the network within the limitations imposed by the constraints of federal funding. If these networks are to continue, some arrangement must be made for such analysis on a regular basis. Then procedures for redirecting the network in the direction of progress must be established and found acceptable by the membership. In these ways, the network generates continuation through goal-oriented progress collaboratively developed.

Section IV: Stages in a Network's Life

A network is essentially a temporary organization falling outside the purview of its bureaucratic sponsors, developed for limited purposes to fulfill relatively specific functions. Permanent continuance of the network requires developing a bureaucracy formed from elements of the founding partners or establishing a "monitoring agency" to facilitate collaborative action by the agencies. Usually, however, network initiators are not concerned with such long-range change in organization, not because of shortsighted vision, but from a need to use networking as a means to achieve rapid and broad-based support for problems requiring immediate and concerted action. (A leading exception appears to be the National Diffusion Network which is being institutionalized about as rapidly as it is being created. Note, however, that the support is supplied by the central source rather than by the participants, and if the funds were suddenly to evaporate, as in the case of Teacher Corps, it is possible that the effects would be the same.)

The preceding section suggested several stages in the formation and maturation of a network based on the concept of the temporary system and organizational development. The process may be summarized in step-by-step fashion:

The idea of the network is initiated and some few persons begin action towards achieving a "worthy" aim.

Others join the bandwagon, and the network matures as an important vehicle for facilitating innovation and change.

Problems change, but the network, committed to a plan of action (and as with Teacher Corps, a source of funding), finds itself unable to maintain the enthusiasm of its members under these new and uncomfortable conditions.

Interest begins to diminish; members bail out (or at least fail to continue enthusiastic support).

But the experience was so valuable that reverie sets in, and there is talk of reconstructing to meet the new realities, despite the loss of initial support and changing nature of the problems which motivated the network's establishment.

The lessons of the old network form the basis for the formulation of a new organization, including many old members in new roles and facing new problems and issues, such restructuring based on new funding (and in the case of Teacher Corps networks, independent of the original source of inspiration) and using lessons learned from the previous experience.

Or

The network members feel committed to the original network concept which becomes increasingly outmoded until the network dies.

All these stages are significant for the development of networks and the important lessons which can be learned from them, and it appears that they can have their greatest value as learning systems if they are viewed as beginning, maturing, and ending. As Schon suggests, "If government is to learn to solve new public problems, it must also learn to create the systems for doing so and to discard the structure and mechanisms grown up around old problems."¹ It is precisely the problem of bureaucracy that it is unable to do this. Schon comments:

The general rule is that agencies come into being and assume their form in response to specific national problems and crises. When the problems and crises disappear or change drastically in nature, the old organizational structure

persists. The actual physical structure of Washington, with its layers of buildings in varying architectural styles, is a symbol of this organizational process. *In government, as in most other established institutions, the organizational equivalent of biological death is missing.*² (Italics added)

Perhaps one important lesson from the Teacher Corps network experience has been that this important lesson has escaped us once more. It could be time to say goodbye to Teacher Corps and look to the next stage of challenging the persistent and inexorable problems of making teacher education relevant--of even catching up with the present when our institutions are so slow to change. In this evolving concept of approaches to the problem, the networks have been a valuable aid to understanding and have served as a model for future collaborative directions. Their success is perhaps best measured by the fact that we see next steps and feel the need to continue collaboration and to raise the problems to a sufficiently pervasive level of the organization to have impact on the system. Because the important question remains, where do we go from here? And in a slightly wry zen sense, we may respond by feeling we're already there!

Section V: Conclusion

Members of the Far West Teacher Corps Network learned to work together in a parity governance relationship to help maximize their individual project purpose and potentials. For those who are interested in establishing or re-establishing a network, there are some generalizations which may be of value:

- Even though a network's members do not have identical objectives, it is possible and probable that they can help each other if they share an overriding common goal.
- Network governance, as well as program policy and implementation, should rest in equality among the membership and shared decision making.
- Much open, horizontal communication among the network's members is the requisite if a network is to be effective. Sharing, which is a product of such communication, is the glue which holds together the network's members.
- Continuous communications and sharing tend to build a synergistic relationship among network members. This relationship, in turn, leads to creative, positive problem solving.

- Generalizable, as well as specific types of training, can be implemented effectively and efficiently through the network structure.
- Resources aside from those associated with explicit training can be shared among network members.
- Flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of its evolving members' projects characterizes a successful network. Shared decision-making fosters flexibility and responsiveness.
- The network can serve successfully as a linkage with national, regional, and state-level agencies whose policies and activities impact member projects.
- The successful network provides managerial and technical coordination necessary to effect the policies and practices listed above.

Networking as a way of organizing independent agencies for the pursuit of mutually acceptable general goals holds considerable potential. The Far West Teacher Corps Network's experience provides evidence that there would be value in pursuing further this potential.

CHAPTER 4

Footnotes

¹Schon, Donald. Beyond the Stable State. New York: Norton, The Norton Library, 1971, 116.

²Ibid., 163. (*Italics added*).

APPENDIX A

Model for Network Activity: Far West Teacher Corps Network

Prepared by Roland Goddu

The three basic components of network activity are:

- Identification of: (a) needs both within the individual local project and throughout the network as a whole, and (b) resources capable of meeting these needs
- Implementation of a network delivery system which makes use of people identified as network resources to bring skills and information to projects identified as needing them
- Publication of documents and reports to meet needs not met through the use of human resources

Strengths and Needs Identification

Network personnel (both from outside and within the project under observation) identify and report the needs, problems, strengths, and resources of the local project. The individual reports are analyzed and compared by the network board or its delegate in order to:

- Pinpoint specific areas of need and strength throughout the network
- Determine strengths and weaknesses common to many projects and, thus, characterizing the network as a whole

Delivery System

The network facilitates development of needed skills in local projects by means of a delivery system which:

- Matches a project in need of certain information and skills with people or projects possessing such information or experiences.
- Provides a design for the implementation of training activities which facilitate the effective conveyance of needed skills and information. This training may take the form of information workshops, observation and demonstration activities, or problem-solving activities, depending on whether the project need to be met is for awareness, skill development, or means of adapting general knowledge to needs and objectives specific to the project.

Project Need

awareness
skill development
adaptation

Activity Designed to Meet Need

information workshop
observation/demonstration activities
problem-solving activities

Steps in the implementation of the training component of the delivery system are:

- Mature project or expert is paired with other project or individual
- Mature project or expert develops and organizes materials for awareness workshops, and presents workshops
- Mature expert develops exemplars, samples, and opportunities for skill development activity, and records as case study
- Project in need or learner attends awareness session, participates in skill development activity, and organizes demonstration of application which expert reviews for consistency to model
- Mature project or individual certifies that the learner has become an expert on the topic

Developmental Model: The delivery system (i.e., the identification of needs and resources and the training and validation components), supplemented by a review of the effect of training activities, may be seen as a developmental model, or system for:

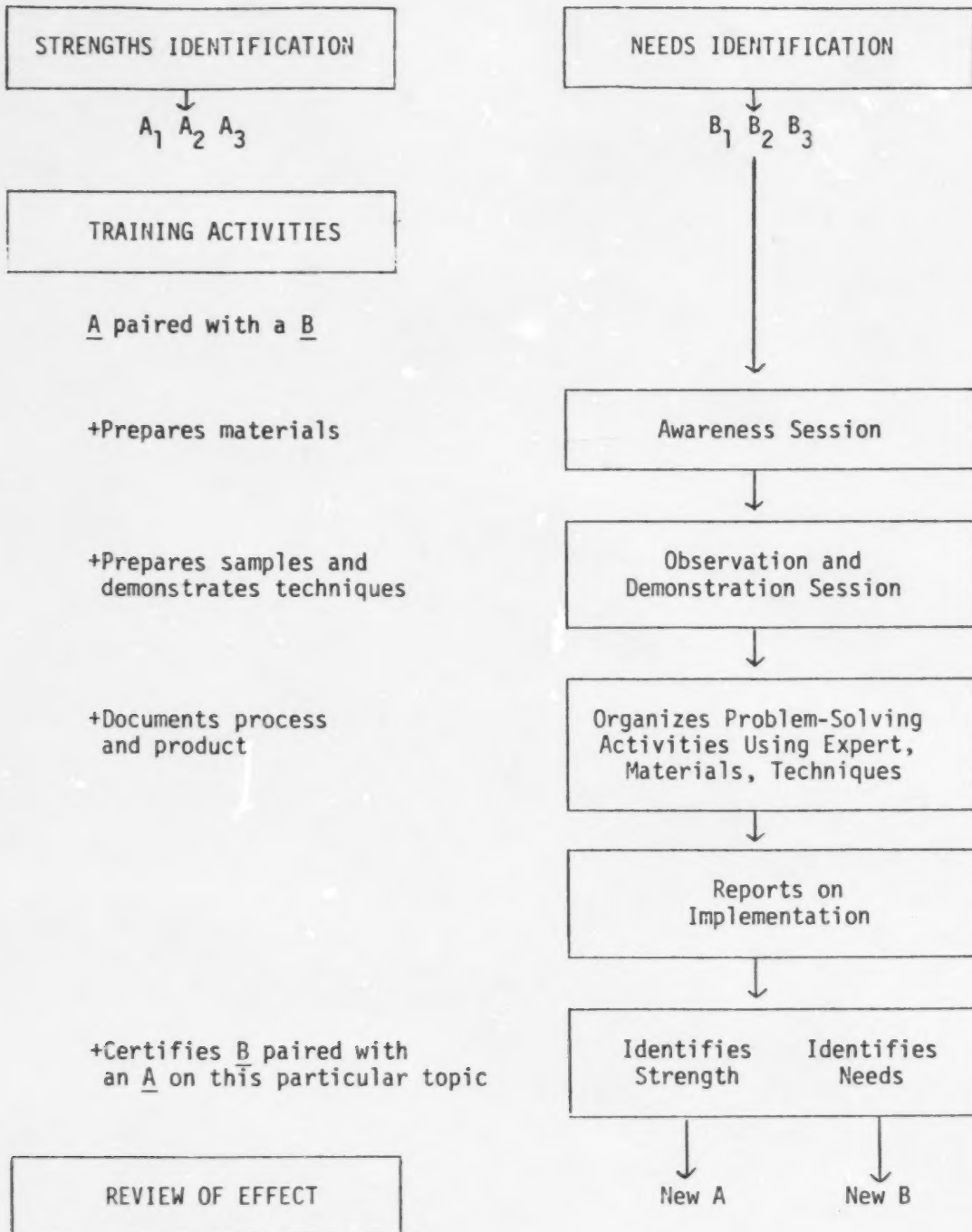
- Transforming learners into experts who then teach new learners
- Building on the results of training activities to modify and improve the delivery system

See chart on following page.

Development and Dissemination of Products

The final component of the network model is production of resources which meet project needs not met through resources provided through the delivery system.

- Resource documents, including informational handbooks describing concepts and techniques; catalogs of samples, exemplars, and demonstrations of techniques and processes; directories of available experts on specific subjects
- Reports of training sessions and other network activities
- Reports of implementation attempts listing activities and people involved
- Implementation report describing processes used in and products resulting from network activities
- Validation reports describing processes or products in use and documenting evidence of their effectiveness
- Effect reports documenting the impact of an activity on the project or network



- +Site visit or projects that report implementation
- +Survey of project attending awareness session
- +Interview of participants in observation and demonstration session with follow-up observation (if possible) of those reporting use of techniques